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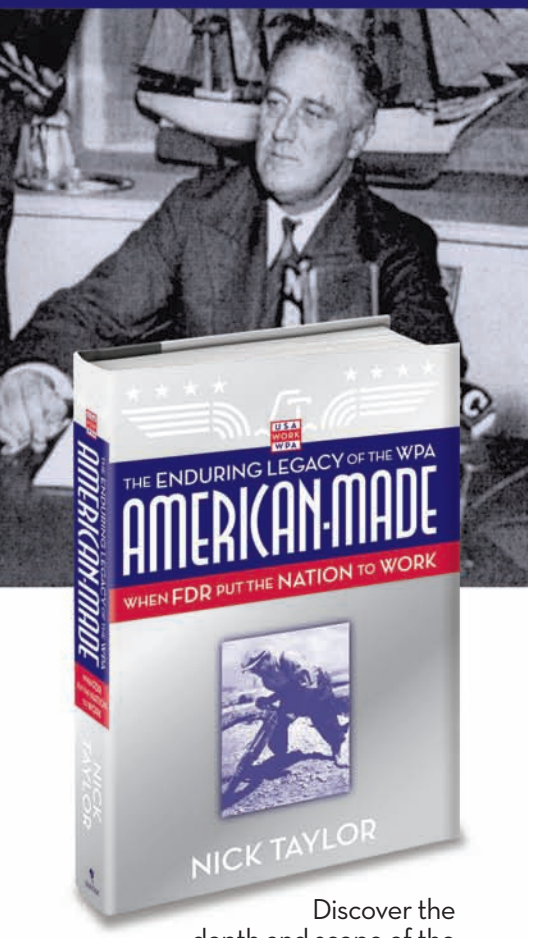

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Letters

About That Obama Endorsement...

New York City

I was not surprised by your endorsement of Barack Obama ["Obama's Promise," Feb. 25]. But I was astonished that you made no mention of an editorial you ran almost exactly twelve months earlier vowing "not [to] support any candidate who does not call for a speedy withdrawal of our troops" from Iraq ["Into 2008," Feb. 26, 2007]. "Speedy withdrawal" is *not* Obama's position, by a long shot. Not only has he promised to maintain a military presence in order to protect the new US Embassy in Baghdad, the largest embassy in the world; he also says he'll keep troops in or around Iraq in case "Al Qaeda attempts to build a base within Iraq." Considering that Al Qaeda already has a base in Iraq, this is a loophole big enough to admit a B-52. Promises of any kind of withdrawal, speedy or sluggish, are thus meaningless.

Obama also says he'll send two additional brigades to Afghanistan, increase the number of US combat troops overall by 100,000 and strike at "terrorist" targets inside Pakistan with or without the Pakistani government's say-so. Not even the Bush Administration goes that far.

The next time you run a tough-talking editorial like the one in February 2007, perhaps you ought to attach a disclaimer saying, "Not to be taken seriously."

Daniel Lazare

The Editors Reply

In November 2005 we stated in our cover editorial: "*The Nation* will not support any candidate for national office who does not make a speedy end to the war in Iraq a major issue of his or her campaign." We urged all voters to join us in adopting this position. In February 2007, we harked back to that editorial when we wrote, "This magazine has already staked out its position on one of the day's great challenges: ending the military occupation of Iraq. We will not support any candidate who does not call for a speedy withdrawal of our troops."

In accord with our November 2005 statement, Barack Obama has made a speedy end to the war in Iraq a centerpiece of his campaign. His opposition to that war from its start has been the core of both his distinction from Hillary Clinton and his legitimate claim for having the judgment needed to be President.

This does not mean that *The Nation* endorses every one of his Iraq-related policies. Obama's plan to end the war—like that of the largest bloc of antiwar Democrats in Congress—falls short in some important respects. The size of the embassy he plans to maintain, his ambiguous stance on private contractors and his plans for a sizable "follow-on force" are all reasons for concern (see Jeremy Scahill's "Obama's Mercenary Position," March 17). In the remainder of this presidential campaign, and no matter who wins the nomination, the very definition of withdrawal will be repeatedly contested—and we will continue to publish articles and editorials that strive to sharpen and clarify the terms of that debate. Moreover, we will continue to oppose the commitment of both Clinton and Obama to increasing the size of the military and to spending more on our military than the rest of the world combined. We believe that progressives must mobilize to challenge these policies.

We endorsed Obama as the better choice in this election, in part because we believe that the new energy he is calling into electoral politics will push the limits of his own politics. We applaud him for his commitment to grassroots organizing and mobilization, for unleashing this new energy. It will be our task—and the task of activists and others across the country—to keep pushing beyond the limits that he or any candidate for President would define.

The Editors

Cancellations Left and Right

Montclair, N.J.

What gives me the most royal pain in my old left-wing bottom are people who cancel subscriptions at the drop of an

(continued on page 30)

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The Gentlemen's Bailout

The Federal Reserve's announcement of an open-ended bailout for Wall Street's endangered financial firms and banks opens an ominous new chapter in what might be called "market socialism with American characteristics." If Washington tries to do something for "losers" who are ordinary citizens, financial titans complain about violating free-market principles. When the titans themselves are going down, they rush to their patrons at the central bank and demand extraordinary relief. Government must save the big money, we are told, for the overall good of the economy. Thus, the financial system's reckless losses—approaching $1 trillion but probably far more—are being "socialized," dumped on the public, the very people victimized by its snares and falsified valuations.

EDITORIAL

Put aside the obvious hypocrisy and greed. This nation is on the brink of a historic catastrophe. It requires emergency responses from the federal government on a scale not seen since the Great Depression and the New Deal, the subject of this special issue. Yet the rescue party is composed of the same people who cowrote this disaster. They are, first, the financiers who indulged their own appetites for extreme wealth and enlarged a financial system of esoteric fakery that inflated prices and profits. Second, the close collaborators were the Federal Reserve and other authorities who blessed this dangerous concoction and declined to enforce prudential standards.

Now the hoax is falling apart. Many millions of innocents, here and around the world, will suffer painful consequences. The authorities, meanwhile, are trying to "save the system" by propping up failure. We do not suggest that the government should not intervene. On the contrary, it must intervene far more forcefully—using the unique emergency powers of the Federal Reserve and Congress to cauterize the wound and take over private firms if necessary. To impose stern new rules of conduct on financial firms as the price of rescue. To ensure a reliable flow of capital and credit to the real economy—industry, commerce and consumers—which has been bullied for many years by Wall Street's distorted values.

In a nutshell, here's what the Fed did after tortured negotiations with Wall Street players: it first bailed out Bear Stearns with a loan that failed to reverse the collapse of the firm's stock price and assets. Then it gave JPMorgan Chase a loan guarantee of $30 billion to protect it against losses as it took over Bear Stearns. Most significant, the Fed promised open-ended loans on easy terms to some twenty other major investment houses to protect them against the same threat. Nobody can put a price tag on all of the central bank's rescue promises—many hundreds of billions if the deterioration continues—but the main point is, the Fed has agreed to take the rotten financial paper, such as home mortgage securities, off the hands of these troubled firms.

What did the Fed demand in return? Not much, it seems, but nobody knows. These private deals were made among gentlemen of high finance; no need to bother the public with complicated details. If that sounds harsh, check out the websites of the Federal Reserve Board and the New York Federal Reserve Bank. Their brief, utterly opaque announcements were addressed to bankers, without a word of explanation for citizens. In this crisis, the Federal Reserve is an untrustworthy agent for the public interest. Its institutional bias is to defend the club members and cover up its own errors.

To understand the gravity of our larger situation, think of this crisis in three layers. The first layer is the panic—the visible worldwide flight of investors and other banking interests from the poisoned assets in the US system. The second layer

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VIDEO NATION

Winter Soldier testimony

NATION POLL

How can government best bail out the economy?

ACT NOW

New Deal 2008: Share your ideas

is the deflation of Wall Street's long-running hyperinflation of financial assets, the value of stocks, bonds, short-term loan paper and other instruments. For two decades, the Fed tilted monetary policy to favor capital over the real economy of production, creating dangerously lopsided conditions. Now Wall Street is going through its own contraction, and many more high-flying firms, including hedge funds, will fail or be taken over at bargain prices or both. In the long run this should be good for the US economy, restoring balance that the Fed's one-sided monetary policy destroyed. But in the short run it could be perilous—starving the productive economy of credit.

The third layer of crisis is the massive loss of US capital. That means more debt will be piled on the nation's already massive indebtedness to foreign creditors. One way or another, the country cannot restore itself unless it replenishes lost capital—not simply for banking and finance but for the overall economy. To put it bluntly, this means a bailout from abroad—the Asian and Arab nations with vast surpluses of capital. Those nations (one hopes) will buy larger shares of US companies, including Wall Street, or lend directly to the US government or both.

An activist government would respond aggressively on many fronts, but unfortunately we don't have one. Congress, including most Democrats, has been utterly deferential to the Fed and the financial titans. The President is clueless, though he may still veto any positive legislation. But this crisis won't wait for the next election. Here are some steps that Congress ought to try now:

§ Force the Federal Reserve to come clean about the secret terms of any deals it made with the bankers. What operating rules did the Fed impose on the firms it assisted? What is the real public exposure to loss? These bailouts should strip failing firms and shareholders of their entire assets, including contracts that allow CEOs to ruin their firms and then walk away with $100 million in severance pay.

§ The central bank needs a public agenda for bailing out Wall Street—a set of new requirements on future behavior in investment and banking that begins to reform the financial system. If a troubled bank refuses to accept these terms, let it fail. If necessary, put the firm in receivership and take it over.

§ Create a US recovery fund to invest in restoring the real economy, not the shrinking financial system. It would borrow capital to support an aggressive agenda of public investments. This fund could take over the ruined securities now held by the Fed and manage them for some years until they can be gradually put back into the marketplace without slaughtering homeowners or depressing real estate prices. Any firm bailed out by government must be prohibited from ever buying back these assets on the cheap, profiting on its own failure as Wall Street firms did in the savings-and-loan crisis.

§ Americans need to increase their savings safely. Congress can create a federal savings fund that pays modest interest rates and protects savings against inflation and the shenanigans of private funds. This savings pool, guaranteed by government, can lend capital to the recovery efforts and even become a first step toward repairing the broken pension system.

In other words, it is time again to think big, the way New Dealers did. But even reform-minded legislators are intimidated by the power of Wall Street money and ideas. The crisis might change that, as politicians begin to realize that Wall Street is yesterday.

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Winter Soldiers Speak

COMMENT

While on tank patrol through the narrow streets of Abu Ghraib, just west of Baghdad, Pfc. Clifton Hicks was given an order. Abu Ghraib had become a "free-fire zone," Hicks was told, and no "friendlies" or civilians remained in the area. "Game on. All weapons free," his captain said. Upon that command, Hicks's unit opened a furious fusillade, firing wildly into cars, at people scurrying for cover, at anything that moved. Sent in to survey the damage, Hicks found the area littered with human and animal corpses, including women and children, but he saw no military gear or weapons of any kind near the bodies. In the aftermath of the massacre, Hicks was told that his unit had killed 700–800 "enemy combatants." But he knew the dead were not terrorists or insurgents; they were innocent Iraqis. "I will agree to swear to that till the day I die," he said. "I didn't see one enemy on that operation."

Hicks soberly recounted this bloody incident to a packed auditorium in Silver Spring, Maryland, as part of Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan, a summit hosted March 13–16 by Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). Modeled after the 1971 Winter Soldier Investigation—in which Vietnam veterans, including John Kerry, testified in Detroit about US atrocities in Vietnam—this incarnation featured more than fifty veterans and active-duty service members testifying about engaging in or witnessing atrocities and war crimes against Iraqi and Afghan civilians. As a precondition for participation, IVAW required veterans to provide corroborating evidence such as photographs, videos and additional witnesses. Former marine Scott Camil, 61, who spoke at the first Winter Soldier event, attended the conference along with seven fellow Vietnam-era witnesses. "When we came home, the World War II and Korean War veterans did not support our activities. I know how that feels," Camil said quietly. "We're not going to let it happen to these guys."

Soldiers and marines at Winter Soldier described the frustration of routinely raiding the wrong homes and arresting the wrong people. It was common for unarmed Iraqis to be killed at US checkpoints or by US convoys, they said. Many said they were congratulated on their "first kill." Some even desecrated Iraqi corpses. Spc. Hart Viges said he refused to pose in a photograph with a corpse when his fellow soldiers prodded him. "I said no—not in the context of, That's really wrong on an ethical basis," he said. "I said no because it wasn't my kill. You shouldn't take trophies for things you didn't kill. That's where my mindset was back then."

Several veterans said it was common to carry a stash of extra automatic weapons and shovels to plant near the bodies of unarmed civilians they had killed to make it look as if they were combatants. Others described the surreal sensation of committing cold-blooded murder without facing any consequences. Jon Michael Turner, who served as a machine gunner with Kilo Company, Third Battalion, Eighth Marines, said he shot an unarmed Iraqi in front of the man's father and friend. "The first

Noted.

SPINE FOUND: "Congress" and "courage" are not words that frequently appear in the same sentence these days, so we should take heart that the House of Representatives showed some backbone recently when it refused to bow to President Bush's fear-mongering on warrantless wiretapping. Since 9/11 Congress has been putty in the executive's hands. The Patriot Act, the Military Commissions Act and the **Protect America Act** all gave Bush virtually everything he asked for—without evidence that he actually needed it. Even the **McCain Amendment** on torture, the one occasion when Congress stood up to the President, was only a minor loss, as the Administration succeeded in ensuring that the amendment would have no enforcement mechanism.

But this time things are different. Refusing to extend the misguided Protect America Act permanently, the House is insisting that wiretapping authority include judicial checks to minimize intrusions on the privacy of citizens and residents. And instead of granting blanket retroactive immunity to telecoms that cooperated in the warrantless wiretapping program, the House has directed that a court adjudicate the matter on the merits. The Administration claims the sky will fall if Congress does not do its bidding. But we can gather intelligence and abide by our principles at the same time. Maybe Democrats have learned that holding telecoms accountable and safeguarding privacy are political winners. DAVID COLE

A NEW DEAL (RE)GENERATION? To commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the New Deal, and to remind the next generation of progressive leaders of their movement's historical roots, **The Roosevelt Institution** and *The Nation* sponsored a student essay contest, asking young writers to reflect on the importance of the New Deal to current political thought. The winner, **John West** of Oberlin College, composed a spirited defense of the New Deal's collective civic consciousness. His essay, "When and How?" is excerpted below. To read it and the four finalists' entries in their entirety, go to www.thenation.com/student.

"The ethos of the New Deal is gone today. 'The era of big government is over,' President Clinton proclaimed, and, with a stroke of his pen, stripped welfare from its moral underpinnings. Social Security, one of the last tangible policies of the New Deal era, has been divorced from the spirit of Roosevelt's vision.... If we reject this conservative framework, we can replace it with our own. If we argue that government has a responsibility to the most vulnerable, we can make the debate about the methods government will use to fight injustice, rather than about how small government should become. If we take this stand, not only will we fulfill the moral imperative of the New Deal, but we can, once again, build a progressive electoral majority."

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round didn't kill him, after I had hit him up here in his neck area. And afterwards he started screaming and looked right into my eyes. So I looked at my friend…and I said, 'Well, I can't let that happen.' So I took another shot and took him out. He was then carried away by the rest of his family." Later, Turner pointed to a tattoo on his right wrist of the Arabic words for "fuck you." "That was my choking hand," he explained. "And any time I felt the need to take out aggression, I would go ahead and use it."

"This is not an isolated incident," the testifiers uttered over and over, to the point of liturgy, insisting that the atrocities they committed or witnessed were common. The hearings were not organized to point fingers at "bad apples" or even particular squads, several testifiers said.

IVAW issued an impassioned statement that condemned not only US military tactics but the occupation itself. "The military is being asked to win an occupation," the statement read. "The troops on the ground know this is an impossible task.… We have a political problem that cannot be solved with a military solution. This is not a war that can be won. It is an occupation that can only be ended."

While the Winter Soldiers offered a searing critique of the military's treatment of civilians, which they described as alternately inhumane and sadistic, they also empathized with fellow soldiers thrust into a chaotic urban theater where the lines between combatants and civilians are blurred. "It's criminal to put such patriotic Americans…in a situation where their morals are at odds with their survival instincts," said Adam Kokesh, who served as a Marine sergeant in the raid on Fallujah in 2004.

For active-duty soldiers and veterans, testifying about combat duty carries new risks—including the possibility of being charged in military court for complicity in war crimes or in federal court under the War Crimes Act of 1996. But such concerns were not enough to silence their voices. "If it's a choice between sitting in cowardice and not speaking up against things that are wrong or being court-martialed, I'll take the court-martial," said Selena Coppa, 25, an active-duty military intelligence sergeant and one of several women who spoke at the hearings.

During the last day, photographs of nameless Iraqi dead flashed on large screens. Army Sgt. Kristofer Goldsmith took the photos on May 15, 2005, a day he remembered as "very hot, uncomfortable and miserable." Goldsmith was ordered to photograph a dozen Iraqis who were presumably murdered and dumped in a large landfill. But the photos were not taken to identify the dead or assist the Iraqi police investigation. "They were used for morale purposes," Goldsmith remarked bitterly. "[Soldiers] bombarded me to copy my pictures. They made videos of them to send home to their friends and families to brag, 'This is war. This is what we did to the Iraqis.'"

The Winter Soldier hearings also featured Iraqi testifiers like Salam Talib, a 33-year-old computer engineering student. Though Talib said he was encouraged to see so many US veterans describing their experiences in frank terms, the testimonies were not much of a revelation for him. "What the American soldiers are talking about is everyday life for Iraqis. They're not even talking about 10 percent of what's happening there," Talib remarked with a shrug. "They are simply giving credibility to the stories that have been told over and over from Iraq by journalists, Iraqis and humanitarian organizations. The American soldiers are saying, 'We're here, we did it and it's true.'" LAILA AL-ARIAN

Laila Al-Arian is a freelance journalist and author, with Chris Hedges, of the forthcoming Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians *(Nation Books), based on their 2007* Nation *article "The Other War."*

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

The Essence of Geraldine Ferraro's Explanation of Why Barack Obama Is In the Lead for the Democratic Presidential Nomination

Just being black is what it takes.
Those colored guys get all the breaks.

Architect of War(s)

What more fitting way for the Bush Administration to observe the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq than to send its principal architect, Vice President Dick Cheney, to Baghdad to rally dispirited US troops for years more of futile sacrifice? "It's been a difficult, challenging but nonetheless successful endeavor," Cheney opined during a surprise visit on March 17, at the beginning of a ten-day Middle East trip. As he toured Baghdad, bragging of "phenomenal" security improvements, a bomb went off in the heavily guarded Shiite holy city of Karbala, killing fifty and wounding dozens more.

COMMENT

Ostensibly, Cheney's visit is intended to lend muscle to the White House claim that substantial progress is being made in Iraq because of the troop surge—thereby burnishing the Administration's "legacy" and enhancing the election prospects of John McCain (who recently made an Iraq trip of his own with this purpose). Cheney also sought to persuade Iraqi lawmakers to pass a national hydrocarbon law, thus smoothing the way for the exploitation of Iraqi oilfields by US energy firms.

But Iraq is only the first stop on Cheney's itinerary. He is also scheduled to visit Saudi Arabia, Oman, Turkey, Israel and the West Bank. At least some of the objectives of these visits have been signaled by President Bush and other top officials. In Saudi Arabia, for example, Cheney is expected to pressure King Abdullah to increase the kingdom's oil output, thereby bringing down US gas prices. Cheney is also expected to pressure Israeli and Palestinian officials to resume peace negotiations.

Lurking behind all this, however, is the Administration's overriding strategic goal in the region: to contain Iran's growing influence and, if deemed necessary, use military force to destroy

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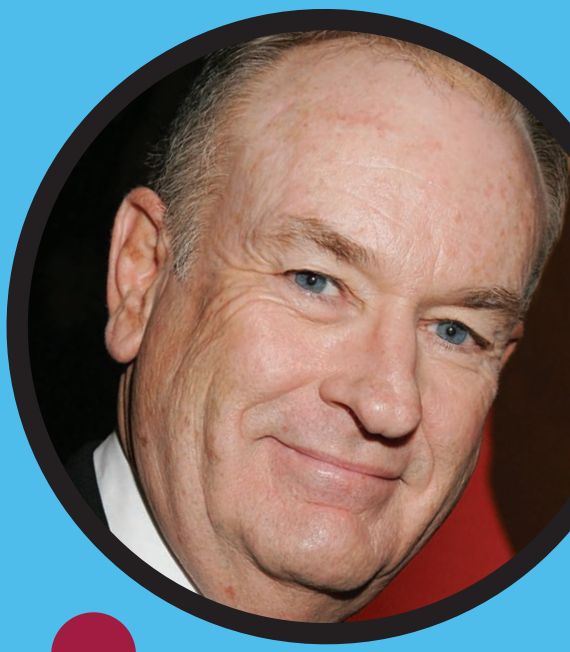

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its capacity to manufacture nuclear weapons. The containment and eventual emasculation of Iran has always been the Administration's principal post-Iraq objective in the Persian Gulf, and now that Cheney can claim a "successful" outcome to its first war in the region, it can begin laying groundwork for the next.

The chief obstacle standing in the way of war against Iran has been the opposition of senior US military officers, who fear that another major military operation would further burden America's already overstretched combat forces. The most outspoken member of this common-sense faction was, until recently, Adm. William Fallon, commander of the US Central Command, which has jurisdiction over all US forces in the Gulf and Central Asia. When first announced a year ago, Fallon's appointment to Centcom was viewed by many as a sign of impending war with Iran because of his experience in commanding air and naval forces, the sort most usable for such an engagement; once in office, however, he proved a vigorous opponent of rash action. In an interview last fall with Al Jazeera, Fallon indicated that a "constant drumbeat" of belligerent statements from Washington on Iran was "not helpful and not useful." When an article on Fallon appeared in *Esquire* that highlighted his criticism of the Bush/Cheney approach, he was forced to resign (though he insists he quit voluntarily). Fallon's departure five days before Cheney left for the Middle East clears the path for a US military strike.

Of all those who have advocated the use of force against Iran, Cheney has been the most outspoken. The last time he visited the Persian Gulf, in May 2007, he stood aboard an aircraft carrier during highly provocative naval maneuvers and warned the Iranians of military attack if they continued to pursue nuclear-arms technology or sought to impede oil shipping in the Gulf. "With two carrier strike groups in the Gulf, we're sending clear messages to friends and adversaries alike. We'll keep the sea lanes open…. [And] we'll stand with others to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons and dominating this region."

As suggested by Cheney's remarks, an assault on Iran is likely to entail air and missile strikes on nuclear facilities as well as naval bases and missile emplacements along the Gulf and its narrow exit-way, the Strait of Hormuz. It is in this context that Cheney's visit to Oman acquires particular significance. Neither a major oil producer nor a major power in its own right, Oman plays a critical strategic role because it harbors key US air bases and occupies the southern shore of the strait. Were fighting to break out in the area, Oman's support would be critical.

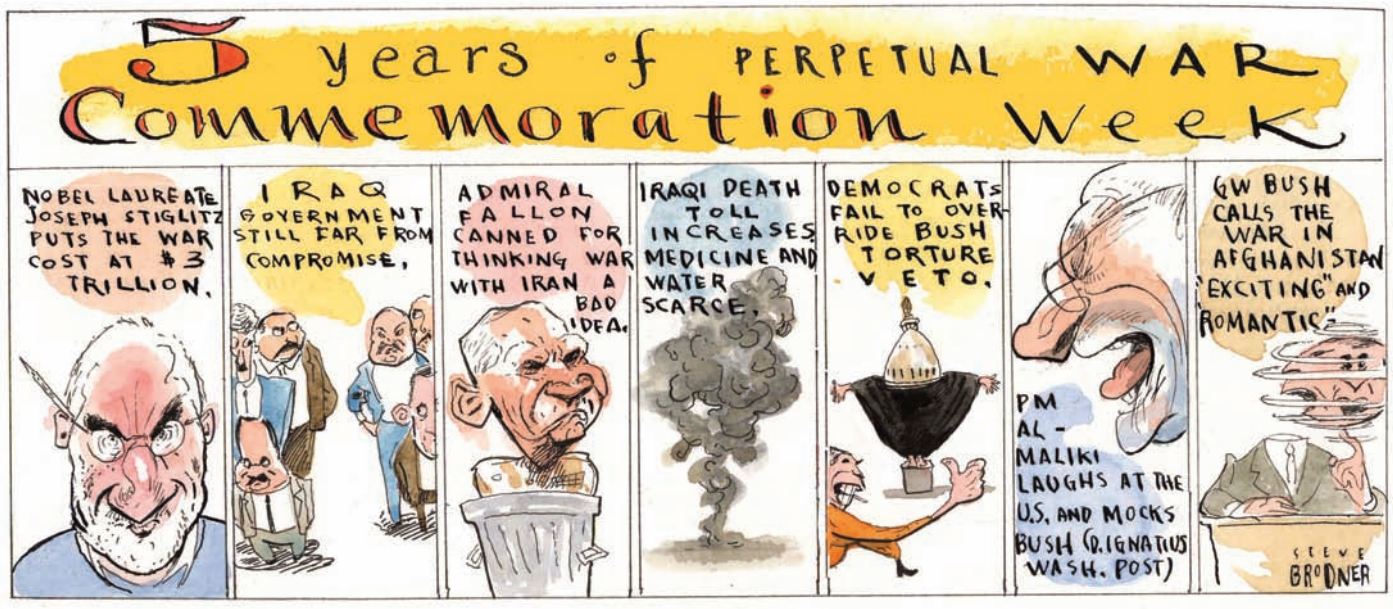
In fact, every stop on Cheney's itinerary is certain to involve consideration of Iran. This is sure to be a major item of discussion in Cheney's meetings with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and other top Israeli leaders, many of whom have made no secret of their desire for a US (or joint US-Israeli) strike on Iran. Cheney may also seek Turkey's approval for the use of the key US air base at Incirlik for future attacks on Iran.

It has become the common wisdom in Washington that the likelihood of war has dropped to near zero because of the release in December of a National Intelligence Estimate claiming Iran had abandoned its plans to manufacture nuclear weapons in 2003, along with the vigorous resistance put up by senior officers like Admiral Fallon. But Fallon is now out of the picture, and the White House shows no evidence of being influenced by the common wisdom; if anything, Cheney's trip suggests that the military option remains as potent as ever. It is essential, then, that he be questioned closely upon his return from the Middle East and that sane voices in Congress and the military continue to resist any move toward another catastrophic military adventure in the Persian Gulf. MICHAEL T. KLARE

Michael T. Klare, defense correspondent of The Nation, *is a professor of peace and world security studies at Hampshire College. His newest book,* Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: The New Geopolitics of Energy, *will be published by Metropolitan Books in April.*

Comix Nation

by STEVE BRODNER


5 years of PERPETUAL WAR
Commemoration Week
NOBEL LAUREATE JOSEPH STIGLITZ PUTS THE WAR COST AT $3 TRILLION.
IRAQ GOVERNMENT STILL FAR FROM COMPROMISE.
ADMIRAL FALLON CANNED FOR THINKING WAR WITH IRAN A BAD IDEA.
IRAQI DEATH TOLL INCREASES MEDICINE AND WATER SCARCE.
DEMOCRATS FAIL TO OVERRIDE BUSH TORTURE VETO.
PM AL-MALIKI LAUGHS AT THE U.S. AND MOCKS BUSH (D. IGNATIUS WASH. POST)
GW BUSH CALLS THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN "EXCITING" AND ROMANTIC"
STEVE BRODNER

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Eric Alterman

The Ritual Sacrifice of Samantha Power

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to argue that Samantha Power is not an extraordinary woman. An all-but-unique combination of combustible contradictions, she is simultaneously a foreign policy insider and outsider, an academic and journalist, an activist and observer, a world-class schmoozer possessed of a burning intensity and an obsession with the understanding and prevention of genocide. Regardless of what form her work takes, Power is exactly the kind of person whose experience, expertise and passion might help repair what remains of America's tattered reputation as we finally approach the close of a benighted political era.

Of course, Power is no politician. She ended up as an adviser to Barack Obama because, as she explains it, "I was supposed to meet him for an hour.... And entering the fourth hour, I heard myself say, 'Why don't I leave my job at Harvard and intern in your office?'" And she hardly spent much time on the campaign. Power received no salary and rarely traveled with the candidate. For much of the past year, she has been finishing and then promoting her massive new book, *Chasing the Flame*, a study of the life and work of Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN envoy killed in a terrorist bombing in Baghdad in 2003. She was doing just that when, during a moment of foolishness, she called Hillary Clinton "a monster" in the presence of a journalist.

Power's problem, as I understand it, is that she forgot she was speaking to a non-American journalist. In this country, typically, journalists are far more interested in maintaining good relations with their sources than they are in reporting what is said and done by politicians. And so most would have gladly allowed her to take her comments off the record retroactively. This practice is arguable at best as a matter of ethics. I don't fault the *Scotsman* for printing what Power said, but I do fault the newspaper, much of our mainstream media and of course the increasingly cynical Clinton campaign for their deliberately inflammatory treatment of it. I mean, really: does anyone think that Clinton campaign staffers—indeed, any campaign staffers—do not talk about their opponents in a similarly angry fashion? And does it really make a damned bit of difference to anyone what Power says she thinks about Hillary Clinton in a moment of unguarded frustration?

Power was forced to resign, owing to the pitiable truth that the people charged with the conduct of our political debate are just too stupid—sometimes purposefully, sometimes cynically—to consider her outburst in context. *Washington Post* media columnist Howard Kurtz was among the first out of the gate, gleefully crowing that Power's comments managed to "blow up her brief political consulting career." Now, Kurtz knows that Power had no career as a "political consultant." She was an unpaid adviser. (Kurtz is actually married to a former Republican "political consultant," one who was quite well paid for her efforts, and so really can have no excuse in this matter.) On his CNN gabfest, *Reliable Sources*, he was joined by a panel of Washington insiders eager to smirk at Power and draw what they pretended were larger lessons from her travails. ABC News's Jake Tapper—projecting what was hard not to view as a hint of the intellectual insecurity and animosity that often afflicts journalists who report on accomplished academics—explained, "But I thought what was even more revealing from that interview was the elitism, the disdain that she talked about, Ohioans concerned about job losses, and they're obsessed with NAFTA. That just kind of betrayed—and that was on the record. That betrayed a sort of university elitism that we have seen before in the Obama campaign." Had Tapper actually been in a classroom at the time, his professor might have asked him to supply, say, a scintilla of evidence for his accusation, or perhaps a definition of "elitism" that somehow excludes extremely highly paid and pampered television personalities. But of course Kurtz let it go. The apotheosis of this supposedly anti-elitist mind-set could be found in the New York *Daily News*, which ran a shot of Power in an evening gown with the headline Pretty Dumb! (That'll show that Harvard hussy. What right does someone who cares about genocide have to wear evening gowns?)

It is a fact, almost universally admitted, that the United States has rarely if ever in its history suffered from more egregious misrule than it does today, and its good name has suffered accordingly and appropriately. And while the denizens of the Bush Administration bear the brunt of the blame for various catastrophes their ignorance, arrogance, incompetence and ideological obsession have visited upon us, a healthy share of the responsibility can also be laid at the feet of toothless media and a spineless foreign policy establishment that helped enable it, despite its better judgment at the time.

Armed with the advice of new voices with new visions, like Samantha Power, Barack Obama represents a challenge to discredited clichés that have hitherto governed US foreign policy. When Obama announced during the Democratic debating season that he had no fear of negotiating with America's enemies, he was immediately attacked by the same tired old voices in the media, the establishment and, it must sadly be added, the Clinton campaign. How refreshing at that moment was the Obama campaign's unyielding response, in the form of a memo by Ms. Power, who wrote:

> American foreign policy is broken. It has been broken by people who supported the Iraq War, opposed talking to our adversaries, failed to finish the job with Al Qaeda, and alienated the world with our belligerence. Yet conventional wisdom holds that people whose experience includes taking these positions are held up as examples of what America needs in times of trouble.... We cannot afford any more of this kind of bankrupt conventional wisdom.

If that's "university elitism," I say, bring it on... ■

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Gary Younge

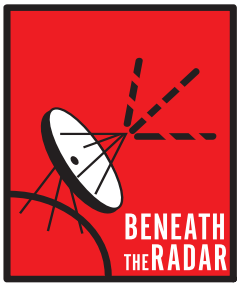
Obama, Ferraro, Wright: 'Postracial' Meets Racism

"The way we see things is affected by what we know and what we believe," wrote John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*. "The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled."

When former vice presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro sees Barack Obama—a black man, raised by a single mother, whose middle name is Hussein and whose surname rhymes with Osama—she sees privilege.

"If Obama was a white man, he would not be in this position," she said. "And if he was a woman of any color, he would not be in this position. He happens to be very lucky to be who he is. And the country is caught up in the concept."

Quite what concept Ferraro was referring to is difficult to fathom. Of the ten whitest states to have voted so far, Obama has won nine of them. Of the ten blackest states to have voted so far (including the District of Columbia), he has won nine of them. The votes are not weighted for melanin content. His lead is the product not of affirmative action but of democratic election.



Shortly after Ferraro made her comments, we saw just how advantageous Obama's race could be when controversy over his pastor, Jeremiah Wright, forced him to deliver a landmark speech about race. Every presidential hopeful has his racial moment. For Reagan it was the Neshoba County Fair near Philadelphia, Mississippi; George Bush Sr. had Willie Horton; Bill Clinton had Sister Souljah; Bush Jr. had Bob Jones University. Each one sought to comfort white voters with at worst their bigotry and at best their ambivalence toward African-Americans.

That was not an option for Obama. Boy, was he lucky. All he had to do was address black alienation and white disadvantage, set it in a historical context and then call on people to rise above it. In so doing, he had to acknowledge not just the fact of physical segregation—schools and housing—but psychic segregation. For while Wright's sermons clearly shocked many whites, to many blacks his sentiments were as banal an addition to the dinner table as hot sauce.

In truth there was only so long you could keep that elephant in the room before it dumped on the carpet. Obama cleared the mess up pretty well. Shifting the stains will be trickier. For all his talk about transcending race, not even this biracial, Ivy League, intact-black-family man could escape America's racial dysfunction.

Which brings us back to Ferraro. For if her initial comments were ridiculous, her response revealed just what Obama is up against. "Every time that campaign is upset about something, they call it racist," she said. "I will not be discriminated against because I'm white. If they think they're going to shut up Geraldine Ferraro with that kind of stuff, they don't know me."

And so Ferraro turns the world on its head. The perpetrator claims victimhood and takes to the airwaves to claim she is being silenced. Having asserted her right to be offensive, she then seeks to deny the right of others to be offended. Accusations of racism, real or imagined, are portrayed as more egregious than racism itself. Obama is lucky because he's black; Ferraro is discriminated against because she's white. White is the new black. We have race without racism.

There are many problems with her retort, but for now let's just deal with two. First, no one from Obama's campaign actually called her a racist. Obama called her comments "divisive" and "patently absurd." His chief strategist, David Axelrod, called her "divisive" and "polarizing."

Second, the comments are patently racist. Indeed, they are taken straight from the playbook of late-twentieth-century racism. Before the civil rights era the accusation used to be that black people could not succeed because they were black. Once affirmative action was introduced the emphasis shifted to suggest that they succeeded only because they were black. Either way the point is clear: black people are genetically ill equipped to succeed on their own merits.

This was no one-off either. Shortly before the New York primary in 1988, Ferraro declared, "If Jesse Jackson were not black, he wouldn't be in the race." One wonders what a black candidate would have to be or do to meet with Ferraro's approval. In November, after Hillary Clinton was subjected to tough questioning in a debate, Ferraro said, "It's OK in this country to be sexist. It's certainly not OK to be racist. I think if Barack Obama had been attacked for two hours—well, I don't think Barack Obama would have been attacked for two hours."

There is a word for people who consistently deny the existence and effects of racism while denigrating black achievement. It's called racist. It is not a word that should be used casually, and it is a word that has at times been misused. But it is not a word that we should refrain from using simply because some people might be offended. Ferraro is a racist. That's not all she is. And that's not all she has to be. But that is what she has consistently chosen to be in her response to black men in politics.

To insist on this is divisive only insofar as it divides racists from antiracists. Those who seek to set underrepresented groups against one another must be challenged. There can be no progressive coalition in this country that does not include black men and white women. But that coalition must be based on antiracism and antisexism. Feminism that does not embrace antiracism, like antiracism that does not embrace feminism, is little more than a campaign for sectional interests masquerading as a struggle for equality. It seeks not an end to inequity but just a different division of the spoils.

Given his looks, oratorical skills and intelligence, it is difficult to imagine what Obama couldn't do if he were a white man; but it's pretty obvious that he wouldn't have had to make that speech. In the end, though, it may be less useful to speculate about what his candidacy would look like if he were a different race than to wonder how he would fare if there were no racism. ■

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President Franklin Roosevelt signs the Emergency Banking Bill into law, March 9, 1933.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WHY THE NEW DEAL MATTERS

by RICHARD PARKER

When my mother died last year, at 93, her loss wasn't just personal in the way a parent's death always is. After my aunts and uncles and then my father died, she'd been, for the past fifteen years, my last direct family link to Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. For me—a cradle Democrat—losing that connection meant a rite of passage all its own.

Mother never met Roosevelt, but to her his achievements defined Democratic politics—American politics, really—for almost half a century. Like Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, I was born in 1946, the year after FDR died, and though my generation has acquired its own (mixed) reputation, all of us know how much we're the progeny of his generation and his legacy. Our 1960s Presidents, JFK and LBJ, mimicked his triple-initial moniker and were always being measured against him—Kennedy most often for his elegance and eloquence, Johnson for his programs. And when '60s students began calling themselves the New Left, it may have distinguished them from the Old Left—but perhaps it also evoked the keystone of all postwar American politics, the New Deal.

The power of FDR has always been such that even conservative counterrevolutionaries had to be careful how they disavowed him and his programs. By the 1980s, Ronald Reagan—who'd voted for Roosevelt four times—knew exactly whose jaunty, upbeat style to mimic, even as he played Brutus to Roosevelt's legacy. After GOP Jacobins captured control of Congress in 1994, their doughy Robespierre, Newt Gingrich, claims he consciously modeled his agenda on FDR's Hundred Days—and in recent years he unabashedly declared Roosevelt "the greatest President of the twentieth century."

Under the Bush-Cheney presidency, the Republican revolution's remaining brightness dimmed significantly for most Americans. One might think these past several months, filled as they have been with heated debates over hope and experience, where Democrats come from and where they're going, would have yielded more talk and reflection about the New Deal and FDR.

Poll after poll, after all, shows that Americans are ready for more government of the kind the New Deal represents—more caring, more equitable, more willing to counterbalance the private power of corporations and concentrated wealth—and they are, frankly, tired of GOP pieties (and invective) about high taxes, big government and endless deficits. (Quick quiz for your conservative relative: who was the last Republican President to actually balance the budget? Answer: Eisenhower.) By twenty-point margins or more, voters are telling pollsters they trust Democrats over Republicans to tackle the big issues of our time.

This tectonic shift in public opinion today isn't the only good reason for celebrating what Roosevelt did. Most historians, after all, rank him as the greatest of our modern Presidents. And for Democrats, constantly fretting about "electability," he is the only President to have been elected four times. So he must have done something right—something we can learn from and use in this new century.

Yet strangely—apart from Bill Clinton's brief-lived comparison of Hillary to FDR (and of himself to Teddy Roosevelt) late last year—there has been almost no serious reference to, let alone examination of, this most extraordinary of American Presidents, either by the candidates, the mainstream press or the upper reaches of the commentariat. Even the fractious blogging world—never at a loss for words—has largely ignored him and the lessons his victories (and defeats) might teach us.

One simple reason for the silence is age: all the major candidates in this election season (save John McCain) were born—like nearly three out of four voters—after FDR died. (More telling, most major bloggers are post-Nixon babies, with a few prodigies even post-Reagan.)

But age is not the only reason. Andy Stern, the very bright, vocal (and brash) head of the Service Employees International Union, America's fastest-growing and second-largest public

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services union, has proposed a second, more powerful one: that the New Deal is no longer relevant. "Anyone who might long wistfully for a return to the New Deal," he remarked bluntly not long ago, "should consider that America today is as far from the time of FDR as the New Deal was from Abe Lincoln and the Civil War." As far as Stern is concerned, it's time for us to move on.

I'm just glad my mother never read that.

Matt Bai, a thirtysomething *New York Times Magazine* writer and author of *The Argument*, a tough, controversial look at the Democratic Party and the billionaires, bloggers and other insurgents on the left who want to change it, has pronounced the same conclusion. Until the Democrats—and liberals and progressives generally—figure out a new governing vision "more contemporary than defending the programs of the New Deal," he concludes, they will remain nothing more than "a slightly dated alternative to the mess that is modern conservatism."

I'm glad my mother never read that either.

It's not that she'd have been shocked; she'd heard her share of Roosevelt's many opponents declaring him and the New Deal seditious, irrelevant, dead (or worse) ever since 1932. Lest we forget, that first election year *The Nation*—like much of the "sophisticated" left—backed Norman Thomas, while the Communists were unsparing in their disdain for "capitalism's savior" until Moscow declared a timeout in the mid-1930s for the anti-fascist Popular Front.

Roosevelt was the last Democratic President truly committed to multilateralism and to a non-militarized American presence in the world.

Right-wingers never called a timeout. They attacked Roosevelt far more relentlessly than the left during his lifetime—and have done so ever since. In this, Reagan and Gingrich were exceptions, but in their speeches to bipartisan audiences, not their behavior. Amity Shlaes's recent history of the Depression, *The Forgotten Man*—billed by Shlaes as a "fresh look" at FDR—assaults his character and policies so unremittingly that a newcomer to this history might honestly wonder how such an ogre ever won public office [see Kim Phillips-Fein's review on p. 34]. And in the just-published *Liberal Fascism*, conservative columnist Jonah Goldberg underscores Roosevelt's indisputable awfulness by telling us that Hitler and Mussolini once spoke well of him and likened their own programs to the New Deal!

(My mother, a kind and refined woman, taught my brothers and me how FDR had firmly but deftly dealt with such critics. "A conservative," the crippled President declared, his trademark grin spread across his face, "is a man with two perfectly good legs, who, however, has never learned to walk forward." She felt that to be comprehensively dispositive.)

But what is it about the New Deal and about Roosevelt that makes the man and the era relevant today?

One frequent shorthand answer I still hear from New Deal supporters rests on policy achievements: Social Security, bank and stock market regulation, government-backed home mortgages, a progressive income tax, a federal minimum wage, guaranteed workers' rights, aid to higher education, private pensions and healthcare plans and a vast array of public works projects still used today—from giant Western dams and the Tennessee Valley Authority to thousands of bridges, tunnels, roads, sewers, water systems, post offices and airports.

A second legacy is still vitally important, but I hear about it less often—perhaps because it's become so commonplace or because its importance has been so steadily derided and confused, thanks to the right's attacks over the past sixty years: the systematic public macromanagement of the economy, through active fiscal, monetary and regulatory policy as well as the steadying effects of government's one-third share in the GDP.

Republicans, for all their "small government," have never rolled back that share and indeed have been significant handmaidens in its increase: government's share of GDP reached its highest post–World War II level under Reagan and is today under Bush larger than it ever was under Clinton—or, for that matter, Truman, JFK, LBJ or Carter (or the New Deal itself). Conservatives may love to hate Keynesian fiscal management, but Alan Greenspan played the part of a monetary Keynesian to their unending delight.

The difference between Democrats and Republicans has been not about government's size but about spending priorities—defense versus domestic programs, in the most naked terms—and about revenue choices (and their consequences), especially the post-1980 GOP's willingness to accept swelling deficits and public debt as the price for tax cuts asymmetrically favoring the few over the many. From Truman through Carter, public debt fell dramatically as a fraction of GDP; since 1981, save during Clinton's second term, it has risen—and now is more than double its 1981 low level, with interest payments on that debt alone costing us far more than all the conservatives' favorite bêtes noires combined—welfare, foreign aid, funding for the arts, etc.

There's a third facet to Roosevelt that is vital for Democrats to celebrate today: he was the last Democratic President truly committed to multilateralism and to a nonmilitarized American presence in the world. It was FDR who pushed through—in the form of the United Nations, the IMF and the World Bank—the architecture of internationalism that Woodrow Wilson had dreamed of but failed to achieve. And we know from his wartime politics and diplomacy that he was fully committed, on the one hand, to the decolonization of the world and, on the other, to finding means to engage Moscow after the war, a policy that might have headed off the cold war, or at least its worst excesses.

Yet as I write these words, I also know why people like Stern and Bai can talk about the New Deal as seeming far away and somehow irrelevant.

Young people don't think Social Security will last another generation—at least in a form that will secure their retirement. Bank and stock market regulation? Aren't we in the midst of a

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meltdown that started with subprime mortgages but whose real scope and scale is still scarily unknown? Why do these sorts of financial crises keep recurring? Didn't a gargantuan stock bubble burst at the start of the century? Wasn't there an Asian—and then Russian and Latin American—financial collapse in the 1990s? Why is it that, from way back in the Reagan years, the words "savings and loan," "Rust Belt," "October '87," "downsizing" and "Japan Inc." recall unhappy memories? The progressive income tax is now much less progressive, the minimum wage in our "world is flat" era looks almost comically ineffectual and neither seems to be doing much about closing the American income and wealth gap.

You see my point. Most of the "New Deal legacy" that people like my mother loved, celebrated and trusted seems to have become fragile, crippled, emaciated, distant—you choose the adjective.

But here's another important point my mother understood: the appearance of fragility and distance has resulted not from the New Deal's failures, she and I agreed, but from policies advocated by those so-called New Democrats who emerged thirty years ago, when white Southerners fled the Democratic Party. At first desperate to woo them back, and then, when that failed, at least to woo non-Southern independents and moderate Republicans to their cause, the New Dems became Rockefeller Republicans in Democratic drag.

Jimmy Carter's early-stage deregulation of the airlines, telecoms, rail, trucking, energy, banking and Wall Street set the stage for Reagan—and, in certain areas, surpassed him. Mike Dukakis and Walter Mondale both championed technocratic efficiency, but that platform lacked the larger vision or community that FDR Democrats had championed for decades. Bill Clinton, confident that "the era of big government is over," pushed NAFTA and the WTO on his resistant party as models of trade deregulation; accelerated telecom, energy, and food and drug deregulation; and, under Robert Rubin's tutelage, rolled back the enormously successful financial market firewalls that Roosevelt had put in place.

What are the achievements of these deregulated markets and government reinventions? Airlines? Cable TV? Banks? Savings and loans? Electricity (remember Enron and California)? Wall Street (take your pick: LBOs in the 1980s, with Boesky and Milken; then in the 1990s the tech-stock bubble, AOL/Time-Warner, analysts-as-stock touts; the Asian, Russian and Latin American crises; the housing bubble-subprime-CDO fiasco today—which is or isn't over)?

How about the decreasing oversight of food and drug safety? Toys from China, anyone? Cooked books at Fannie Mae? The government student loan mess? Blackwater as the model of a deregulated, outsourced military in Iraq? The growth rate of the American economy? The distribution of income and wealth? You get the point.

In 2008 the sudden surging support for Barack Obama's "audacity of hope" politics—especially among the young—seems to arise from the same impulses that set the political stage in 1932, 1960 and 1980: a profound sense of the need to end what has gone before and to try something new.

My mother never much described her then similarly young generation (she was 19 when FDR took office) as committed to any explicit "Rooseveltian" agenda in 1932 or thereafter. What they were committed to was their belief that Roosevelt cared about them and their future—and the nation's future as a just and equitable society. They didn't know the language of economists or of technocrats (Hoover had spoken that dialect); they knew instead the terms of family and neighborhood and community, and Roosevelt used those terms and talked to them in their language. They didn't much care where FDR got his ideas but rather whether they worked and seemed somehow fair and gave people a sense of their worth and dignity.

Few historians today think FDR had a finely tuned policy agenda in the back of his mind at any point during his twelve years in the White House. What he did have, though, was worth far more. Eliot Janeway, looking at FDR's oft-criticized record in preparing the nation for war—and for what became the swiftest, most enormous and most complex expansion of the economy and the government in America's history—named what was essential.

> Roosevelt's critics have said—and say—he organized Washington into…a comptroller's hell, into a jungle of confusion.… They are right. He did. And yet this irresponsibility—so disastrous on the face of it—did not result in disaster.… To Roosevelt, the important question was the participation of the nation in its own defense, not the administrative planning for this participation.… So long as the home front was big at the base, Roosevelt was willing to bet he could let it be confused at the top—and he and he alone had the power, the genius, the dramatic instinct, and above all the daring to make it as big outside Washington and as amorphous inside Washington as he pleased.

Crucial among FDR's gifts was his ability to share not so much policies but stories, parables that incorporate moral and ethical vision.

It's those qualities—his ability to project a sense of trust in people's ability to rise to common needs and dreams, plus his capacity as democratic leader to help them find the means needed to triumph—that defined Roosevelt's genius. And it's crucial for us to recognize why his style of "democratic leadership" was and is more challenging than "leadership of a democracy" or of business leadership or military leadership or most kinds of political leadership touted as "what we need today." Crucial among the gifts of a true democratic leader, as FDR clearly was, is the ability to share not so much policies but stories, parables that incorporate moral and ethical vision, narratives of who we are and where we came from, and why we are together and where we can go, and what we can achieve if we work together.

March 4 marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of FDR's inauguration as President—and more than likely, you heard his famous line about "nothing to fear but fear itself" trotted out for beneficent, bipartisan approval. It deserves to be quoted—but take a moment and go online to read the whole speech (like

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the Gettysburg Address or JFK's inaugural, it is not long) and read down until you come to his description of how America will recover and grow once more. This is what he said about the reasons we'd been made afraid:

> Our distress comes from no failure of substance.... Compared with the perils which our forefathers conquered because they believed and were not afraid, we have still much to be thankful for. Nature still offers her bounty and human efforts have multiplied it. Plenty is at our doorstep, but a generous use of it languishes in the very sight of the supply.
>
> Primarily this is because the rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed through their own stubbornness and their own incompetence, have admitted their failures and abdicated.
>
> Faced by failure of credit, they have proposed only the lending of more money. Stripped of the lure of profit... they have resorted to exhortations, pleading tearfully for restored conditions. They know only the rules of a generation of self-seekers.
>
> The money changers have fled their high seats in the temple of our civilization. We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths. The measure of the restoration lies in the extent to which we apply social values more noble than mere monetary profit.
>
> Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. These dark days will be worth all they cost us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow-men.

In the roughly ninety seconds it took FDR to deliver those words on a bleak and unpromising day in Washington at the tail end of winter seventy-five years ago, he described a politics, an economics and a morality at once—and thereby told Americans how they could and should make change, that he would lead them in doing so and who would oppose them.

He didn't cut to the middle or appeal to an interest group; he didn't divide the country into friends and enemies (though he named those he intended to struggle against); and he held out the promise that all could work together, though he knew in truth they never would.

And then together, the Americans who knew his story—and knew it was their own—set about the work ahead of them. ■

Toward a *New* New Deal

Seventy-five years ago, facing the catastrophic, worldwide failure of the free market, Franklin Roosevelt launched what is perhaps the greatest democratic experiment of the twentieth century. Touching nearly every aspect of American life, the New Deal transformed banking, business, labor, agriculture, arts and literature, urban and rural landscapes and, of course, the relationship of citizens to government itself. Today, decades of conservative rule have jeopardized much of the New Deal's legacy. Many of its reforms and regulations have been gutted, and much of the infrastructure it built crumbles from neglect. Yet the New Deal endures, not just in institutions like the FDIC and Social Security but in the very idea that where and when there is crisis government should rise to the challenge for the good of the common people. How can a look back help us confront the challenges of the present—from the tangled housing, credit and financial market crises to global warming to the small-mindedness of public policy and debate today? What is the unfinished business of the New Deal? And what can we learn from its failures and limitations? On this historic occasion we asked an esteemed collection of activists, writers, scholars and artists to reflect on the "usable past" of the New Deal. Their answers follow.

A Green Corps

by Bill McKibben

In the forested Northeast, where I live, you occasionally come across big stands of red pine. They're wonderful trees—jigsaw puzzle bark, a gorgeous hue against snow or blue sky—but if you know the history, they have another meaning, too, just as sweet. Red pine are a fairly rare native species in this area, but they were one of the trees of choice for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s. They grow straight; they make good phone poles. For whatever set of silvicultural reasons, there are a lot of these groves of 70-year-old trees. Every time I wander through one, I think of Franklin Roosevelt and try to imagine the crews that came out to plant them.

We usually talk about New Deal programs in terms of their effect on the mood of Americans—they restored hope, they gave people back their dignity and so on. Sometimes we talk about how they helped get the economy afloat again. But there was another result: the hundreds of thousands of actual projects that were built in those years. Hiking trails, city halls, bridges, park gazebos, public plazas, dams, and on and on. For my money, that's the kind of work that needs doing now, as we face a crisis even greater than the Depression: the quick unraveling of the planet's climate system in the face of our endless emissions of carbon dioxide.

Many people have used the Apollo Project (or the Manhattan Project) as the template for how we can quickly wean ourselves off fossil fuels and replace them with renewable sources of energy. That's good as far as it goes—we do need new technologies. But in a sense our task is almost the reverse of the Apollo Project. Instead of focusing our resources to land a few people on the moon, we need to spread them out to affect everyone. It's as if we've got to get the whole nation into orbit, and fast. And for that, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the CCC (and the industrial thrust to gear up for World War II) may provide a better analogy.

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The people hired by these agencies went out and did things, and did them in large numbers—the CCC planted 3 billion trees (which would be no small help with global warming). Imagine an army of similar size trained to insulate American homes and stick solar photovoltaic panels on their roofs. They could achieve, within a year or two, easily noticeable effects on our energy consumption; our output of carbon dioxide might actually begin to level off. And imagine them laying trolley lines back down in our main cities or helping erect windmills across the plains. All this work would have real payoff—and none of it can be outsourced. You're not sending your house to China so they can stuff it with cellulose.

There are people starting to think along these lines: the Green for All campaign has been pushing for a billion-dollar commitment for a quarter-million green jobs of just this kind, designed to pull people out of poverty. And as the depth of our environmental trouble and the probable recession become clearer, others are more ambitious yet: on the fortieth anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, activists will gather in Memphis for the Dream Reborn, a conference whose organizers argue that were King still alive he'd be fighting to take on the twin scourges of global warming and global inequity with a massive new public works campaign.

The Depression and the war that followed were the last great civilization-challenging events; global warming is the next threat on that scale. It stands to reason we'd turn for instruction to how the challenge was met last time.

Bill McKibben is the author of a dozen books, most recently The Bill McKibben Reader, *an essay collection. A scholar in residence at Middlebury College, he is co-founder of the new grassroots climate movement 350.org.*

Not Your Father's FCC

by Michael J. Copps

"To the extent that the ownership of and control of…broadcast stations falls into fewer and fewer hands," the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) concluded, "the free dissemination of ideas and information, upon which our democracy depends, is threatened." With those words, the FCC ordered the breakup of the leading broadcast network and banned a single company from owning more than one station per city.

Is this an FCC you recognize? Probably not. That's because it's not your FCC—it's your father's FCC (maybe even your grandfather's). These media reforms were the work of James Lawrence Fly, the FCC chairman appointed by Franklin Roosevelt in 1939. A card-carrying New Deal trustbuster with good access to the President, Fly was a relentless opponent of "chain broadcasting"—the domination of local broadcasting by the CBS and NBC Red and Blue radio networks.

What a far cry from the media regulation we have today. In 1981 President Reagan appointed an FCC chairman who described a television set as nothing but a "toaster with pictures." The commission went on to dismantle nearly every public-interest obligation on the books and to enable a tsunami of media consolidation. The results have been disastrous—reporters fired, newsrooms shuttered and our civic dialogue dumbed down to fact-free opinions and ideological bloviation.

The good news—to paraphrase Arthur Schlesinger Jr.—is that eras of reform follow periods of reaction. The New Deal for media in the late 1930s came not a moment too soon. The "Roaring Twenties" emphasized media commercialism and consolidation. Though educational institutions operated stations in radio's infancy, by the time of the New Deal, fifteen years of regulatory decisions ensured that they had been crowded out by large for-profit corporations. (See Robert McChesney's and Paul Starr's works for gripping accounts of this fight.)

Even the early New Deal bill creating the FCC largely ratified the status quo by omitting a Senate amendment that would have allocated 25 percent of the radio spectrum to nonprofit broadcasters. Only with the reforms of the Fly-era FCC did the New Deal really begin to grapple with media consolidation. Even that momentum stalled too soon, as—in FDR's own words—"Dr. Win-the-War" came to supplant "Dr. New Deal."

Thankfully, the postwar years saw a reinvigorated FCC. Regulators who had listened to Edward R. Murrow's broadcasts from London's rooftops were not afraid to demand that networks invest in marquee news operations. Then came the Reagan years of backlash, deregulation and consolidation.

Today, a new spirit of change is abroad in the land. The question is whether we can have media capable of covering the issues that real Americans—not just Wall Street and Madison Avenue—care about. A media environment dominated by the established interests, unwilling or unable to reflect the concerns of ordinary citizens, is the natural enemy of change and the progressive spirit in American politics. Truly democratic, diverse and vibrant media, on the other hand, are a powerful engine for turning grassroots hope into political possibility and eventually an irresistible force. All the other critical issues discussed in the magazine you are holding will be significantly influenced—perhaps determined—by whether we can democratize our media.

Where to start? First, let's reinvigorate the license-renewal process. Under FDR, renewals were required every three years, and a station's public-interest record was subject to FCC judgment. Today a broadcaster sends in a postcard every eight years, and there is no credible public-interest evaluation. We need to get back to renewing every three years—and add enforceable guidelines to encourage coverage of real local news, culture and civic affairs. Second, let's revisit media ownership—this means not just preventing bad new rules (like letting more newspapers own TV stations) but revisiting the bad old rules that made this mess in the first place. And finally, let's make sure the Internet remains free of the network consolidation and content control that wreaked such havoc on more traditional media.

The struggle for media democracy is uphill but winnable. Let us take encouragement from the great Walter Cronkite, who says, "America is a powerful and prosperous nation. We certainly should insist upon, and can afford to sustain, a media system of which we can be proud." It is time to work together to show that it can be done. Our democracy depends upon it.

Michael J. Copps is a Democratic member of the FCC and a former assistant secretary of commerce in the Clinton Administration.

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A Chaos of Experimentation

by Andrea Batista Schlesinger

Historian Richard Hofstadter once characterized the New Deal as "a chaos of experimentation." Fresh ideas were constantly tossed on the wall to see what stuck. They didn't always work, but this spirit of experimentation was an attempt to address the central problems plaguing Americans at the time.

The National Industrial Recovery Act led to higher prices and ultimately overstretched the bounds of federal authority, but it set a minimum wage and forced big businesses to collaborate with one another to get out of the Depression. The WPA didn't cure unemployment, but it was an ambitious experiment that allowed 3.3 million people to put food on their tables. Contrast this effort with our recent Congressional debates over whether we should extend unemployment insurance an additional thirteen weeks (a proven solution) or pass any kind of stimulus package "quickly."

Today's policy experiments are profoundly insubstantial, offering the smallest of ideas to counter the most peripheral of challenges. The annual State of the Union address is a perfect example, where we all wait with bated breath to see which idea of microscopic import will be floated with much fanfare. One year it was steroids in baseball (well, I guess Congress thinks this is really important too). This year the President spent more time talking about earmarks than he did discussing the home mortgage crisis devastating the nation's economy, despite the fact that earmarks are only half of 1 percent of the budget. The right wing's devotion to small government is reflected not just in spending limits but in its limited imagination of what government can do.

But the GOP isn't alone. There is a certain brand of Democrat, who came to power in the '90s, who revels in policies about school uniforms, mandatory 401(k) plans and tax rebates—as if school uniforms can fix the profound problems facing public education. Look at the Senate Democratic Policy Committee's "Fresh 50" report and you'll find limiting gift card expiration dates, a "Hire Heroes" public-service campaign to put returning veterans to work and a plan to develop 25,000 Super Principals to ship out to our neediest schools. These ideas are good ones. I applaud the Senate Democrats for acknowledging that generating new ideas is an important function of government. But these ideas are inoffensive and marginal, and don't directly tackle the major issues of the moment.

This approach—one that organizations like the DC-based Third Way perpetuate—is dangerous because it conflates political strategy with policy impact, appealing to moderates with small, innocuous ideas. The reason Americans of all stripes loved FDR wasn't because he offered culturally neutral and politically safe proposals but because he was fighting to better their lives.

Ultimately, much of this comes down to balancing the role of government and that of business and corporations. The New Deal grappled with—and ultimately failed to resolve—this central dilemma of democratic governance. New Dealers themselves were divided and spent too much time trying to intuit the motives of business. But if we can get back to the heart of this issue, we can create a legacy even greater than that of the New Deal.

To do so, we will have to recognize that the greatest lesson the New Deal has to offer us is about the spirit of our government itself. As FDR put it, "The country needs and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it: if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something."

We need our leaders to recapture the urgency of the New Deal era, an enthusiasm for experimentation that attempts to address Americans' core challenges and not just win elections. Without that spirit, even a Democratic White House will be a failure.

Andrea Batista Schlesinger is the executive director of the Drum Major Institute, a progressive policy think tank based in New York City.

The Bare Minimum

by Eric Schlosser

"The proposal is unworkable, un-American, impractical and dangerous to our institutions," said Representative Wade Kitchens, a Democrat from Arkansas, during the Congressional debate over the Fair Labor Standards Act. What were these radical ideas, guaranteed by the last great piece of New Deal legislation, that in Kitchens's view threatened the future of the Republic? A minimum wage, limits on overtime and a prohibition of child labor. In submitting the act to Congress on May 24, 1937, President Franklin Roosevelt succinctly explained its basic goal: "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work."

It's good to keep in mind some of the labor conditions in the United States before passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Workers were often forced to work ten to twelve hours a day, six days a week. They earned as little as twelve cents an hour. They were sometimes paid in scrip, redeemable at a company store, instead of money. A survey of American children conducted by the Labor Department found that one-quarter worked for sixty or more hours a week. The median wage for children was $4 a week. All of this was justified in the name of "freedom," as business groups championed the liberty of contracts and the liberty of employers to hire, fire and set wages without any restrictions. The Supreme Court had consistently upheld that notion of freedom, overturning a federal child labor law in 1922 and a local minimum wage law the following year.

The Court abruptly switched course in March 1937—amid Roosevelt's effort to pack it with sympathetic Justices—and affirmed the right of Washington State to require minimum wages for women and minors. Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes argued that "the denial of a living wage" not only harmed workers but placed an unfair burden upon society. "What these workers lose in wages the taxpayers are called upon to pay," Hughes noted in his majority opinion. "The community is not bound to provide what is in effect a subsidy for unconscionable employers."

Two months later Roosevelt sent the Fair Labor Standards Act to Congress, launching one of the most bitter legislative battles of the New Deal. Despite overwhelming popular support, Southern Democrats joined forces with Republicans to oppose

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the act, forming a coalition that would thwart future New Deal legislation. Their spirited defense of low wages and the liberty of employers delayed passage of the bill for more than a year. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, signed by Roosevelt that June, was a watered-down version of the original. It provided exemptions for agriculture and other industries, as well as a minimum wage of just 25 cents an hour. Nonetheless, it established fundamental economic rights for American workers.

Seventy years later, the Fair Labor Standards Act is still under attack. "A higher minimum wage equals less economic freedom," a Heritage Foundation essay claimed last year. Although the rhetoric is more subdued, the underlying attitude has changed little since Representative Kitchens railed against the bill. The minimum wage doesn't eliminate poverty; it creates poverty, we are told. When do-gooders demand a higher wage, poor workers lose their jobs. Countless studies are cited as proof. Yet the period of America's greatest economic growth coincided with its highest minimum wage rates. In 1956 the minimum wage in today's dollars was about $7.93 an hour. Adjusted for inflation, the minimum wage reached its peak in 1968, at about $9.91 an hour. During the decades that followed, its real value declined by almost 50 percent. That enormous pay cut for the nation's poorest workers benefited some industries enormously—supplying cheap labor to fast food restaurants, retail stores and farms—while imposing enormous costs on society. When the federal minimum wage hits $7.25 in July 2009, it will still not reach the level considered adequate by President Dwight Eisenhower.

The high-minded arguments against the minimum wage, for the most part, are merely justifications for higher corporate profits. Since passing a minimum wage law in 1998, Britain has enjoyed some of the fastest economic growth rates and lowest unemployment rates in the European Union. The British minimum wage is now equivalent to more than $11 an hour. "No business which depends…on paying less than living wages to its workers has any right to continue in this country," President Roosevelt once declared. "By living wages I mean more than a bare subsistence level—I mean the wages of a decent living." Those words are as true today as when they were first spoken. I hope our next President will not only agree with Roosevelt on this subject but will have the courage and compassion to do something about it.

Eric Schlosser is the author of Fast Food Nation *and* Reefer Madness.

The Only Fitting Tribute

by Frances Moore Lappé

I feel a bit silly. For decades I called myself a child of the '60s, only to realize on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the New Deal that I'm really its child. Coming to maturity as its beneficiary, I had a debt-free college education and, thanks to New Deal advances that doubled the real family income of the poor and middle class, my husband and I were able to live for a time on his salary alone.

It was thus, very practically, the New Deal that freed me to explore the "big questions." Food, the basis of life, seemed like a smart place to start, so I asked, Why hunger in a world of plenty?

Soon it began to dawn on me: as long as food is merely a commodity in societies that don't protect people's right to participate in the market, and as long as farming is left vulnerable to consolidated power off the farm, many will go hungry, farmers among them—no matter how big the harvests.

I might have gotten there quicker if I'd studied Roosevelt's insight that, to serve life, markets need help from accountable, democratic government. Against those who saw "economic laws" as "sacred," he argued that "economic laws are not made by nature. They are made by human beings." So in 1944 (my birth year), Roosevelt called on Americans to implement what was already "accepted"—"a second Bill of Rights" centered on economic opportunity and security. It would, in effect, put values boundaries around the market. His goal wasn't a legal document, observes University of Chicago law professor Cass Sunstein, but the generation of a "set of public commitments by and for the citizenry, very much like the Declaration of Independence."

The first two economic rights assured a "useful" job that paid enough to provide "adequate food and clothing." The third guaranteed farmers a high enough return for their crops to provide their families with a "decent living." To begin, he asked Congress to pass a "cost of food law," putting a price floor under farmers and a price ceiling on the cost of food necessities for all.

In emphasizing rights, Roosevelt clearly did not view the New Deal as a giant safety net; rather, he saw it as a way to advance freedom. Freedom rests as much on economic as political rights, he argued, because both are necessary to security and peace, which in turn are the basis of citizens' freedom from fear and to the liberation of our talents. "Necessitous men are not free men," he said.

What if Americans were now to demand that presidential contenders further Roosevelt's definition of freedom? Imagine calling on our next President to focus, laserlike, on FDR's core insight that concentrated economic power is anathema to democracy and freedom. By April 1938, even after basic economic protections for citizens were law, Roosevelt still warned that "the liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to the point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself. That, in its essence, is fascism." (Roosevelt could hardly have imagined such "growth in private power" that more than sixty lobbyists now ply their trade in Washington for every person elected to represent us.)

Given the New Deal's powerful grounding in freedom and the striking advances it ushered in for most Americans, why was the right able to reverse the New Deal in just one generation? Perhaps the answer is that the New Deal failed to instill an understanding of democracy as more than a particular structure of government, more than a set of laws protecting our freedoms. Enduring, effective democracy isn't something we have that's finished; it's what we do that's always unfolding. Democracy is a particular culture, a system of values—fairness, inclusion and mutual accountability—that empowered citizens learn to infuse in all dimensions of our common life.

In other words, to save the democracy we thought we had, we must now take democracy to where it's never been. Might

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we start by demanding that the 2008 presidential contenders commit to engaging us in living democracy—in community-based deliberation, policy shaping and action, on matters from climate change to ending hunger to reinventing farming so that it sustains both farmers and the land?

There could be no more fitting tribute to the New Deal in its seventy-fifth year, at least in the eyes of one of its children.

Frances Moore Lappé is the author of fifteen books, including, most recently, Democracy's Edge.

Race and the New Deal Coalition

by Adolph Reed Jr.

The triumph of Reaganism in the 1980s, and the attendant demise of the New Deal coalition that had formed under Roosevelt and consolidated in the postwar years, prompted a wave of reflection and debate among leftists, liberals and Democratic ideologues. The perception that Reagan's victory had resulted substantially from the defection of suburban white middle- and/or working-class, particularly male, voters fueled an argument that Democratic liberalism had failed because it strayed from its "traditional" base and became too narrowly identified with "special interests" like racial minorities. This view, which represented the New Deal as having been built on a nonracial, or "universalistic," approach to social policy, often went hand in hand with a nostalgic call to return to that supposedly traditional principle by retreating from race-targeted policies and race-conscious politics.

But the fact is, most New Deal programs were anything but race-neutral—or, for that matter, gender-neutral—in their impact. Some, like the initial Social Security old-age pension program, were established on a racially invidious, albeit officially race-neutral, basis by excluding from coverage agricultural and domestic workers, the categories that included nearly 90 percent of black workers at the time. Others, like the CCC, operated on Jim Crow principles. Roosevelt's housing policy put the weight of federal support behind creating and reproducing an overtly racially exclusive residential housing industry.

That so much of recent liberal and left discussion of the New Deal has been charged by the imperatives of current political debates has given it an unfortunate either/or quality. In reality, the New Deal was both racially discriminatory and a boon to many black Americans. Blacks benefited relatively less than whites from many social policy initiatives. Worse, postwar urban renewal—one of the main conduits of federal resources to the local level—actively intensified racial disadvantage as blacks and Puerto Ricans were displaced for federally supported redevelopment at a rate more than 500 percent greater than their share of the national population. But benefiting relatively less does not mean not benefiting. The Social Security exclusions were overturned, and black people did participate in the WPA, Federal Writers' Project, CCC and other classic New Deal initiatives, as well as federal income relief. Moreover, the National Labor Relations Act facilitated the Congress of Industrial Organizations' efforts, from which blacks also benefited substantially. Black Americans' emergence as a significant constituency in the Democratic electoral coalition helped to alter the party's center of gravity and was one of the factors—as was black presence in the union movement—contributing to the success of the postwar civil rights insurgency.

One lesson to take from reflecting on the New Deal is that political institutions and the politics rooted in them can have significant and far-reaching consequences. The right understands this well. When Newt Gingrich and his protofascist comrades took over Congress in 1994, they sneeringly boasted that they intended to take the federal government back to the 1920s. This was not only because they were bent on eliminating redistributive social programs. They also wanted to extirpate from the culture the idea that government can be an active force for making most people's lives better. By crippling public institutions, they leave us without any rudder or focus for an effective politics.

We need to remember that in the lived experience of younger Americans today, public power and government capacity have been only dismissed and disparaged. Both Democratic presidential candidates qualify their embrace of federal activism and temporize with fealty to market forces and calls to personal responsibility. Therefore, the nostalgic identification that those of us who are older or who grew up in left, union or Democratic activist households feel for the New Deal era will not transfer well to others. I've seen this with my own students. To those young people who encounter the era, unions may have been necessary *then*; federal intervention and regulation may have been appropriate *then*. We can use the New Deal as part of a discussion about what government can do and how its actions can change the playing field in progressive ways. What we need most of all, though, is to articulate a politics steeped in a vision like that of the industrial democracy that fed the social movements that pushed the New Deal to be as much as it was.

Adolph Reed Jr. is a professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania.

For the "FDR"

by the Rev. Jesse Jackson

In August 1996, I spoke at the Democratic National Convention, reminding delegates that progressive public policy change in America requires at least two key ingredients—an enlightened President and an energized electorate:

> In 1932, Roosevelt did not run on a New Deal platform. He was the best option. The workers at the plant gates, they were the answer. A combination of an enlightened President, an energized electorate—that's the coalition.
>
> In 1960, Dr. King chose Kennedy over Nixon. Neither ran on a public accommodations platform. That came from Birmingham. In 1964, neither Johnson nor Goldwater ran on a Voting Rights Act platform. That came from Selma.
>
> When we, the people, coalesce with an enlightened President, we can change America, from the bottom up, from the grassroots to the treetops, for the better.

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An enlightened President. An energized electorate. As we approach the historic 2008 election—with the subprime, subcrime crisis taking the entire economy down—we need these two elements more than ever.

Solutions to the subprime mortgage crisis must take a cue from the New Deal and let the needs of the people push our new public policies beyond the limits of the current campaign. The Bush Administration's plans are too little, too late, help too few and leave most people out in the rain. They don't correspond to the immensity of the problem: 15 million homes at risk of going underwater by the end of the year. An estimated $1.2 trillion in lost equity for America's homeowners. Blacks and Latinos targeted and steered through discriminatory practices into subprime loans, while government agencies turned their backs and failed to enforce antidiscrimination and fair-housing laws. And now entire states, cities and neighborhoods are drowning in the spillover budget impact.

Since we're celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, let's call our new domestic agency the Fund for Domestic Reconstruction—the FDR.

And let's use the FDR to meet the crying needs of poor and working families, the way the New Deal used the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to try to meet the needs of the American people during the Great Depression. Because the people demanded that the New Deal's response be commensurate with existing needs.

We need the FDR, like a Marshall Plan, to save America's homeowners and stabilize our economy. We can use existing agencies like the FHA or Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, at a negligible cost to the government. If we could fund the reconstruction of Europe after World War II, save the farmers and bail out savings and loans in the 1990s, certainly we can stop the foreclosures and repossession of homes and restructure loans on a massive scale today. We should focus on rebuilding our neighborhoods, restoring homeowners' dreams and reinspiring investors' confidence.

The FDR should focus on our neighborhoods, saving people's homes and life savings. It should focus on rebuilding America—restoring our bridges, levees, sewers, schools, highways and railroads. It should focus on providing access to broadband to close the "digital divide" so all can share the high-tech revolution. Let's focus on Equanomics—addressing structural inequalities and advancing a real program for racial and economic equality. It's a way of reinvesting in America and putting America back to work. Unless we act, the crisis will continue to snowball.

What will it take to make an FDR work? Good ideas, of which we have plenty. Getting serious about funding a new war on poverty and stopping the war on the poor, which we can do when we end the war in Iraq and roll back the tax cuts that Bush and Cheney gave to the wealthy. An enlightened President, which we will have if we register and mobilize new voters, work together as a rainbow across lines of race and ethnicity, and don't fall for the old politics of fear. And an energized electorate.

I feel it, don't you? We want change, and we can have it if we keep hope alive.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson is founder and president of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition.

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- **GORE VIDAL**
  12.30 PM, Royce Hall
- **CHRIS HEDGES**
  "Religion: Crises of Faith"
  1 PM, Korn Hall
- **ERIC ALTERMAN**
  "Current Interest: Right & Left"
  2.30 PM, Royce Hall

SUNDAY, APRIL 27

- **JOE CONASON**
  "Current Interest: Checks & Balances"
  10:30 AM, Ackerman Grand Ballroom
- **MARC COOPER**
  "Biography: California Powerbrokers"
  Noon, Haines 39
- **CHRISTINE SMALLWOOD**
  "Fiction: The Magic in Everyday Life"
  Noon, Fowler Auditorium
- **JOHN PALETELLA**
  "Poetry & Fiction: Writing in Two Genres"
  Noon, Humanities A51
- **CHRIS HEDGES**
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Labor's New Deal

by Andy Stern

It's no accident that the New Deal followed by four years the presidency of Calvin Coolidge, who once famously declared, "The chief business of the American people is business." The human cost of the Great Depression created a change in climate that became the philosophical underpinning of the New Deal: the business of the American people was the people themselves—all of the people—not just the tycoons who made the "Roaring Twenties" roar and then crash.

Of course, we are as far today from the New Deal as the New Deal was from the Civil War. We cannot expect that work will be valued and rewarded in a global economy by reflexively copying strategies from an industrial economy. Although our values stay the same, our strategies must change. In the 1930s, employers were local, so local unions were strategically aligned with their employers. Today capital has gone global, trade is global, finance is global and, most important, companies are global—so how can unions assist members by just acting locally? "Workers of the world unite" is no longer an ideological slogan; it is the basis of an effort SEIU embarked on four years ago to create global unions of workers who work for the same employers.

Moreover, almost all labor issues in the 1930s pitted American unions against American businesses. The relationship was almost always adversarial. Today, America needs to act more as a team and create a new plan to compete in a global economy. That plan must start with universal healthcare. We simply cannot compete if we are the only nation on earth that asks our businesses to put the cost of healthcare on our products.

While modern developments—the Internet, fiber optics, cellphones and a globalized workforce and economy—have resulted in a profound transformation of the American economy, they have not erased the basic debate about the proper role of government. Coolidge's heirs today are corporatists who have succeeded in rolling back many elements of the New Deal and the subsequent reforms that helped create a great American middle class.

Roosevelt understood that in addition to government programs, a balanced economy requires strong labor unions. Then, as now, increased unionization created higher wages and benefits for both union members and unorganized workers. As unionization increased, the middle class grew. And as the percentage of workers represented by a union has declined in the past three decades, the disparity of wealth has increased.

Corporatists have persistently tried to weaken two of the New Deal pillars of economic fairness and redistribution: government and the law enacted in 1935 to give workers the freedom to form a union under the oversight of a National Labor Relations Board. In recent years, the NLRB has increasingly been dominated by corporate interests issuing rulings hostile to workers' rights and creating new barriers to workers who want to form unions.

Today, more than half of all workers say they would join a union if they had the opportunity, yet less than 8 percent of private workers are in unions. Billion-dollar corporations hire professional "union avoidance consultants," who gang up on workers in unending private interviews, require them to watch hours of antiunion videos in "captive audience" meetings, punish or fire key supporters, threaten wage cutbacks and closings. These corporations face no consequences for their actions or meaningless sanctions under the current weak law.

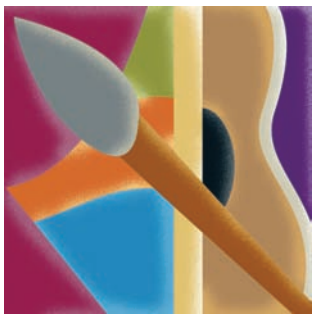
Where the New Deal once served to rebalance the power between labor and capital, we are now perilously out of balance. In recent years, CEO salaries have gone up more than 600 percent. Had we only tied CEO pay to the minimum wage in 1990, the minimum wage would be more than $23 an hour and the average production worker would make more than $110,000 a year.

This is why Congress needs to enact the Employee Free Choice Act: to permit workers the choice to unite their voices at work. The House of Representatives has already passed it, but Republicans blocked it in the Senate. Both Democratic presidential candidates support it, and its passage is critical to restoring fairness to the workplace.

As in 1935, America is faced with a choice. Is the role of government to serve the 99 percent of hard-working Americans or only corporations and the super-wealthy? The answer will lead to very different decisions on taxation, education, pensions and healthcare.

We need to take into account the vast changes that have occurred since the New Deal, and we must continually adjust as new changes take place. America still needs strong unions—as well as a government on the side of working people—as part of the solution to rebalance power, provide greater fairness, make work pay and ensure that the dreams of all American children can still come true.

Andy Stern is president of the Service Employees International Union.



Potent Publics

by Anna Deavere Smith

I was enchanted by FDR's "Four Freedoms" speech. I had it on a cassette tape that I came upon in a small bookstore—such bookstores are now few and far between—on the Upper East Side of New York City. It was near where I would get off the Madison Avenue bus to transfer to the crosstown bus after a dry day of temp work when I was a "starving actress." I used to put the tape on and dance to FDR's resonant voice. I had been told that the role of the artist was to "speak truth to power." I couldn't imagine doing anything so grandiose as that—but I did think I was learning something about power by listening and dancing to FDR's fireside chats. The rhythm of his speeches was musical. They were waltzes. He was able to make the country waltz to his waltz-time talking.

Today, our dance is no waltz. Presidents don't talk in easy-to-follow waltz-time rhythms. They talk in a highly sophisticated way, after having been coached by batteries of con-

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sultants, some of whom no doubt studied acting or other art forms. We can't go back to those New Deal days.

These days, many artists have become as creative about their public personas as they are about their work. Self-consciousness is in abundance. To be "public" means to be "in public"—and therefore to be in some way "designed" with the public in mind. It is not for the sake of the public—but for the sake of how one comes across. Form and style over content. Which raises the questions: Is the government the only host of "public"? Who controls the public? Who owns the public?

We have a lot to learn by revisiting the New Deal and by learning what "public" meant then. It did not mean simply to be "in" public. The New Deal was trying, in part, to put people to work. Something was really happening. It wasn't smoke and mirrors.

Yet we have a very diverse public; we have a potent public. More kinds of people are making themselves and their worldviews apparent now. The talent pool is more diverse. In the arts we find more women participants, more participants of color. The public is a global public. Jacob Lawrence, one of the most noteworthy of the New Deal artists, told me that if he saw a white man on the street he would think to himself, "Oh, that's a lyncher." A young African-American artist in this day and age would have a multitude of things he (or she) might think about a white passer-by, or an Asian passer-by, or a Muslim passer-by, or a Latino passer-by.

But as diverse as our public is, the arts are not equally accessible to all. Public schools have long since abandoned the arts as part of their core curriculum. Cultural literacy is low. At the time of the New Deal, during a more segregated era, an era when lynching was still prevalent, many would cite the importance of the Federal Art Project in bringing forward black artists and other artists of color. There is no similarly obvious "host" to ensure the cultivation of talent today.

To us, "public" means not special, not brilliant, not innovative, not valuable, not covetable. Public transportation, public schools, public art—they do not have the same status as their private counterparts. Public means possibly dangerous.

It will be difficult with such a mind-set to revive a time when public art expressed the ideals of a time and helped advance some of those ideals. A new deal would be to envision the public as potent, with a gold rush of excellence waiting to be discovered.

But let's look at the flip side. For the past two decades, we have been in the throes of a technological revolution. The Internet has bred a new public. And often it's direct—people to people. Leadership could cultivate that public. Whether that leadership should come from government, commerce or imaginative individuals is up for grabs. If I were in government, I'd see it as a highly competitive moment and collaborate with artists to speak to that public and cultivate that public. Artists can, in their work and in their words, after all, say a lot more than government can. People assume that artists are speaking "as if it were." They assume the government is pretending to speak "what is." Art is full of hope.

Anna Deavere Smith is an actress and playwright. She teaches at New York University.

Democratizing Capital

by Sherle R. Schwenninger

Historical analogies are never exact. Yet many of the choices we have before us today are similar to ones that an earlier generation of progressives faced as the 1932 election approached. As we do today, progressives then confronted a society beset by a huge gap between classes and an economy laid flat by the bursting of the speculative excesses of the previous decade. To be sure, our economy is nowhere near Depression levels of collapse. But the choices New Deal progressives made are worth revisiting because they provide sound first principles for dealing with the economy and government today. Indeed, many of those principles are even more appropriate for today's world.

The first lesson to be learned from this earlier era is that a large middle class requires an economy that generates a broad base of jobs paying middle-class wages. The New Dealers were not opposed to "rigging" the labor and financial markets to achieve this result. New Deal progressives believed the economy should exist to serve society, not the other way around, and that the government has a duty to shape the economy to meet middle-class aspirations. A high-wage, middle-class society would, in turn, be good for the economy: living wages would not only ensure adequate demand for the economy but in so doing would spur new investment and productivity growth, creating a virtuous circle of rising living standards.

The belief of New Deal progressives in an economy that could create good middle-class jobs stemmed in part from their resistance to large social welfare subsidies to individuals, on the grounds that this would encourage an unhealthy dependence on the state. Moreover, even though they favored progressive taxation, New Dealers were skeptical of a society dependent upon the permanent redistribution of income. The principal goal of many New Deal programs was not to relieve the conditions of poverty—although they often did so—but to build physical and human capital that would allow people to escape permanently from poverty. Thus New Dealers emphasized government programs that expanded education, spread property ownership, invested in America's common physical and knowledge capital, and seeded the industries of the future. It was not perfect, in large part because it preceded the civil rights revolution and thus left out millions of African-Americans. But it did build the largest and most secure middle class America has ever known.

Today we see the consequences of a much different way of thinking about the economy and society. Over the past two decades we have been told that globalization is an immutable force and that we must bend to its demands, embracing the agenda of free trade, financial deregulation and less progressive taxation. The best we can do, we're told, is to let globalization run its course and compensate the losers, even though no amount of new social welfare measures could compensate for the loss of millions of good-paying manufacturing jobs. Thus, without any real debate, America's political elites have chosen for us a highly stratified, low-wage society with great costs to our middle-class way of life and to our productive economy.

The second New Deal principle is about achieving a high-wage economy and at the same time more widely distributing

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the capital and skills for wealth creation. The principal policy tool the earlier generation used was massive public investment and public building. The public investment programs they pursued not only created many new middle-class jobs but also laid the foundation for a more productive economy, which led to even more middle-class jobs. Agencies like the Tennessee Valley Authority in the 1930s and '40s were followed by even more extensive public investment initiatives in the postwar years. From 1950 to 1970, the government spent more than 3 percent of GDP on public infrastructure alone. It built everything from highways to schools, power systems to parks.

Throughout the New Deal era, public investment was America's way of enacting industrial policy. It was understood that public investment paid for itself many times over. The GI Bill alone generated returns of up to $7 for every dollar invested. And because it generated returns to the economy and society, New Dealers in the postwar period were not afraid to raise taxes or to borrow in order to ensure adequate levels of public investment. And borrow they did, even though the national debt was a much larger percentage of GDP than it is now.

For the past few decades, however, we have made a very different choice. As concerns over the budget deficit have grown, and as tax-cutting mania has taken hold, we have cut back on public investment. Since 1980 we have devoted less than 2 percent of GDP to public infrastructure and have allowed federal spending on basic research and development to decline as a percentage of GDP as well. As a result, a backlog of public investment needs—clogged roads and ports, collapsing bridges and levees, uneven broadband access, an antiquated air traffic system, an undersized energy infrastructure—has begun to cut into our economic growth and undermine our efficiency.

A third principle of middle-class America that the New Deal offers us relates to the concentration of power and capital. Earlier progressive reformers distrusted such concentrations. Not only did they threaten democracy; they also warped the economy and distorted consumption and investment. Government therefore must be a strong countervailing force to big business and oligarchic power, and must be organized so that it cannot be captured by one economic group at the expense of another or the general public.

The New Dealers were particularly concerned about the power of Wall Street and the financial community. They feared a national credit system that was dependent on Wall Street bankers, whose interests were not always aligned with the needs of homeowners, farmers and small and medium-sized producers. They therefore sought to democratize capital by creating myriad credit institutions that would ensure that all regions and sectors of the economy had access to capital. They created a variety of federally subsidized credit programs to enable people to construct homes and start businesses and to allow states and municipalities to build schools and modernize infrastructure. It was here that the New Deal was most creative—combining a strong federal state with the local and regional decentralization of capital and the local and regional control of these programs and institutions.

As with other first principles of a middle-class America, we have seen a reversal of priorities over the past few decades, as big financial institutions have again asserted their influence over the economy and economic policy. The new power of Wall Street has been evident in its successful push for financial liberalization and deregulation, in the emphasis accorded the deficit and concerns about inflation as opposed to full employment, and until recently in Washington's preference for a strong dollar, which favors financiers over real producers. This triumph of Wall Street over Main Street has been responsible in part for the hollowing out of the tradable-goods sector and for the asset bubbles and predatory lending that have wreaked havoc on the economy. Indeed, one of the first things the New Deal would have us do is reregulate the financial system and put the interests of the productive economy over those of Wall Street.

In all these respects, whether it be high wages, public investment or the decentralization of financial power, the New Deal succeeded because it changed the way the economy worked. And it did so by marrying progressive reforms with Americans' preference for independence, whether from government subsidy or big-business paternalism. This is the enduring lesson of the New Deal.

Sherle R. Schwenninger directs the Economic Growth Program at the New America Foundation.

FDR's Democratic Propaganda

by Stephen Duncombe

On March 12, 1933, a week after his inauguration and in the midst of a monumental economic crisis, President Franklin Roosevelt took to the radio to address the nation. "My friends," he began in a calm, resonant voice, "I want to talk for a few minutes with the people of the United States about banking." For thirteen minutes Roosevelt patiently explained how banks work, what had gone wrong and what the government planned to do. Thirty times during his presidency FDR engaged the American public, on topics ranging from drought to the judiciary to war, offering his analysis and laying out his plans.

This was propaganda. FDR's talks were scripted by policy advisers and stylized by the playwright Robert Sherwood. Through these homey "fireside chats" the aristocratic Roosevelt recast himself as a plain-talking everyman. Yet listening to these speeches today the listener is struck by how informative they are. Technical details of financial policy and global trade are explained in refreshingly nontechnical language, and while style certainly matters, substance is not sacrificed. Through his radio addresses FDR modeled a relationship between President and citizen. He asked his listeners to think about and apply their own experience to the topic he was discussing and, in one instance, even encouraged them to spread out a map on their dining room table as he charted out battle lines for World War II. In marked contrast to the techniques practiced at the time by totalitarian regimes overseas, this form of mass persuasion did not encourage adulation of a leader but discussion—even if only imaginary—with him.

There was no official propaganda program during the New Deal, just a hodgepodge of media efforts carried out by an alphabet soup of agencies. FDR entertained the press in the White House, winning their loyalty by increasing access to his presidency. Murals created by the Works Progress Admin-

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istration on the walls of post offices and other public buildings retold history as the accomplishment of everyday citizens. The Resettlement and later Farm Security Administrations reenvisioned the face of America by commissioning tens of thousands of photographs of poor farmers and workers.

But the best propaganda for the New Deal lay in the material projects themselves: the parks built, roads constructed and young people put to work by the Civilian Conservation Corps; the integrated system of power, agriculture and industry of the Tennessee Valley Authority; and the handsome, handcrafted Timberline Lodge, built atop Oregon's Mt. Hood by the WPA. These accomplishments were then publicized. In one imaginative effort, the Bonneville Power Administration even paid Woody Guthrie to visit the Columbia River Gorge and write songs in homage to the land, the river and the new federally funded dams.

What all these publicity efforts had in common was an assumption that form and content needn't be an either/or proposition, that aesthetic image and material reality might be complementary, and that publicity could be used to include, not distract, the American people. New Deal publicity spoke to the emotions but also fed the mind. As public relations historian Stuart Ewen argues, "Unspoken, but evident, was a determined and unaccustomed faith in ordinary people's ability to make sense of things." It was propaganda, but it was propaganda in tune with democracy.

Many progressives today have an adverse reaction to propaganda: ours is a politics based in reason and rationality, not symbols and fantasy. Given our present Administration's fondness for selling fantasies as reality, this aversion to propaganda is understandable. But it is also naïve. Mass persuasion is a necessary part of democratic politics; the real issue is what ethics it embodies and which values it expresses. In November, it's possible that Democrats will control both the executive and legislative branches. To capitalize on this moment they need to learn how to mobilize public opinion, and by learning from their past they can do this in a way that supports rather than undermines popular democracy.

Stephen Duncombe is the author, most recently, of Dream: Re-Imagining Progressive Politics in an Age of Fantasy. *He teaches in the Gallatin School at New York University.*

Beyond the New Deal

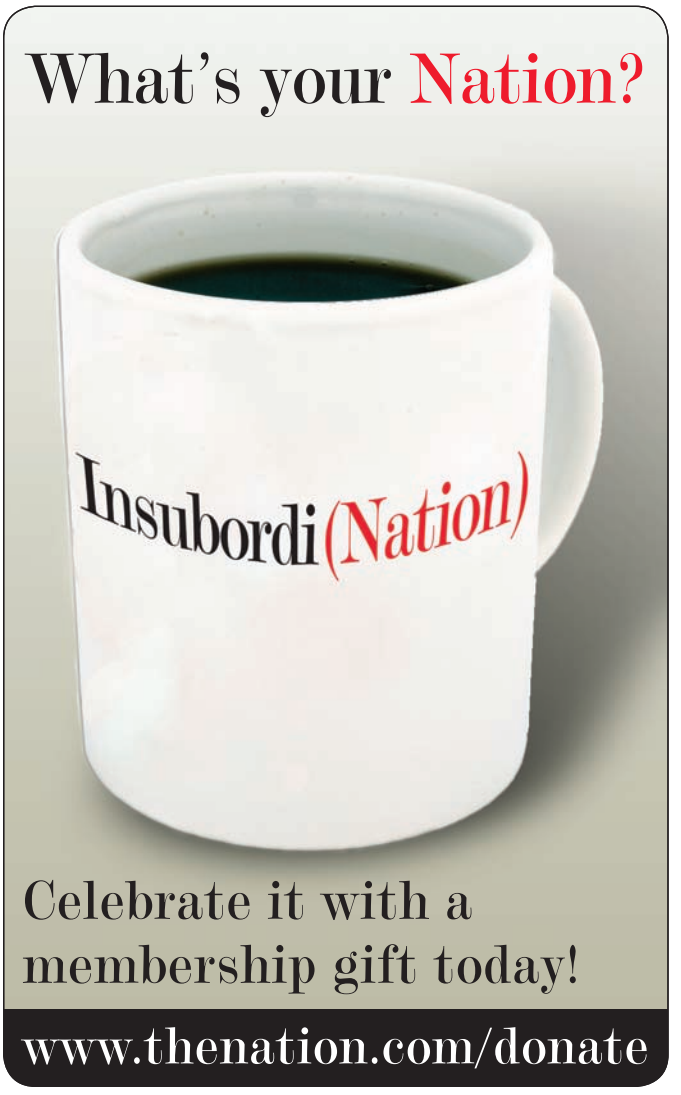
by Howard Zinn

We might wonder why no Democratic Party contender for the presidency has invoked the memory of the New Deal and its unprecedented series of laws aimed at helping people in need. The New Deal was tentative, cautious, bold enough to shake the pillars of the system but not to replace them. It created many jobs but left 9 million unemployed. It built public housing but not nearly enough. It helped large commercial farmers but not tenant farmers. Excluded from its programs were the poorest of the poor, especially blacks. As farm laborers, migrants or domestic workers, they didn't qualify for unemployment insurance, a minimum wage, Social Security or farm subsidies.

Still, in today's climate of endless war and uncontrolled greed, drawing upon the heritage of the 1930s would be a huge step forward. Perhaps the momentum of such a project could carry the nation past the limits of FDR's reforms, especially if there were a popular upsurge that demanded it. A candidate who points to the New Deal as a model for innovative legislation would be drawing on the huge reputation Franklin Roosevelt and his policies enjoy in this country, an admiration matched by no President since Lincoln. Imagine the response a Democratic candidate would get from the electorate if he or she spoke as follows:

"Our nation is in crisis, just as it was when Roosevelt took office. At that time, people desperately needed help, they needed jobs, decent housing, protection in old age. They needed to know that the government was for them and not just for the wealthy classes. This is what the American people need today.

"I will do what the New Deal did, to make up for the failure of the market system. It put millions of people to work through the Works Progress Administration, at all kinds of jobs, from building schools, hospitals, playgrounds, to repairing streets and bridges, to writing symphonies and painting murals and putting on plays. We can do that today for workers displaced by closed



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factories, for professionals downsized by a failed economy, for families needing two or three incomes to survive, for writers and musicians and other artists who struggle for security.

"The New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps at its peak employed 500,000 young people. They lived in camps, planted millions of trees, reclaimed millions of acres of land, built 97,000 miles of fire roads, protected natural habitats, restocked fish and gave emergency help to people threatened by floods.

"We can do that today, by bringing our soldiers home from war and from the military bases we have in 130 countries. We will recruit young people not to fight but to clean up our lakes and rivers, build homes for people in need, make our cities beautiful, be ready to help with disasters like Katrina. The military is having a hard time recruiting young men and women for war, and with good reason. We will have no such problem enlisting the young to build rather than destroy.

"We can learn from the Social Security program and the GI Bill of Rights, which were efficient government programs, doing for older people and for veterans what private enterprise could not do. We can go beyond the New Deal, extending the principle of social security to health security with a totally free government-run health system. We can extend the GI Bill of Rights to a Civilian Bill of Rights, offering free higher education for all.

"We will have trillions of dollars to pay for these programs if we do two things: if we concentrate our taxes on the richest 1 percent of the population, not only their incomes but their accumulated wealth, and if we downsize our gigantic military machine, declaring ourselves a peaceful nation.

"We will not pay attention to those who complain that this is 'big government.' We have seen big government used for war and to give benefits to the wealthy. We will use big government for the people."

How refreshing it would be if a presidential candidate reminded us of the experience of the New Deal and defied the corporate elite as Roosevelt did, on the eve of his 1936 reelection. Referring to the determination of the wealthy classes to defeat him, he told a huge crowd at Madison Square Garden: "They are unanimous in their hatred for me—and I welcome their hatred." I believe that a candidate who showed such boldness would win a smashing victory at the polls.

The innovations of the New Deal were fueled by the militant demands for change that swept the country as FDR began his presidency: the tenants' groups; the Unemployed Councils; the millions on strike on the West Coast, in the Midwest and the South; the disruptive actions of desperate people seeking food, housing, jobs—the turmoil threatening the foundations of American capitalism. We will need a similar mobilization of citizens today, to unmoor from corporate control whoever becomes President. To match the New Deal, to go beyond it, is an idea whose time has come.

Howard Zinn is the author of A People's History of the United States *and, most recently,* A Power Governments Cannot Suppress.

Letters

(continued from page 2)

idea or a position they disagree with—in this case *The Nation*'s support for Obama's candidacy ["Letters," March 24]. It just proves that some lefties can be as rigid and idiotic as righties.

Bob Gold

New York City

I have never written a letter to the editor. This is a first. You mention the shock of some readers at your Obama endorsement. Well, frankly I am shocked that readers of a progressive publication like *The Nation* would be so shortsighted. Maybe they *should* cancel their subscriptions; clearly they want to hear only their own echo and not the informed opinion of *The Nation*.

John Fowler

Waldwick, N.J.

The anti-Obama and pro-Hillary letters in the March 24 issue were unbelievable. Bravo to *The Nation* for endorsing Barack Obama. He will bring a fresh voice, fresh mind and fresh ideas to America. I am a 70-year-old woman, and I am having a problem that so many women will vote for Hillary because she is a woman.

Joan Savoia Pippi

Hugo Chávez: Après Moi?

Charlotte, N.C.

Daniel Wilkinson's "Chávez's Fix" [March 10] did a commendable job of exposing the complexities of Venezuelan politics, something largely absent in the US press, where we are fed ad nauseam that Venezuelan democracy is being circumscribed by a tinpot dictator. The US media, operating in a Manichaean world of good versus evil, report Chávez's unapologetic diatribes with zero context, call him a strong-arm leader of a "regime" and hype his relationship with Castro. The Chávez government deserves its share of criticism. But while we can hope Venezuela's experiment succeeds and does not succumb to authoritarianism and Chávez worship, our main goal must be to stop our own government's designs on Venezuela and the region.

Jonathan McGovern

McKeesport, Pa.

Daniel Wilkinson compares Chávez's response to the April 11, 2002, coup attempt to George W. Bush's actions after 9/11. Bush devastated two ancient societies, while Chávez, when all the powers in Venezuelan society combined with the world's most powerful imperialist to overthrow his duly elected government, responded with measures to undercut those powers and strengthen his revolution. It is somewhat perverse to see either as mainly an attempt "to expand executive power." The threat to the United States after 9/11 hardly changed. (Except, of course, for the possibility that it would put the Administration on the catastrophically stupid course it actually chose.) In Venezuela, the stakes are "With Chávez everything; without Chávez, bullets," which Wilkinson professes not to understand. It means that, once begun, revolutions that fail usually end in a hail of counterrevolutionary bullets, cf. Chile, 1973.

Robert Supansic

Woodstock, N.Y.

Apparently Bush and Chávez hate each other because, although both govern in a somewhat dictatorial way, the maladept Bush does it in a clumsy way with the intention of establishing a hierarchy of the wealthy and reducing the middle and working classes to peonage, whereas Chávez is brilliantly able to rein in the wealthy while enabling the poor and the working class.

Phil Sullivan

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Books & the Arts.

Ordinary People

by ROBIN EINHORN

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A 1787 engraving by Amos Doolittle shows the "Federals" versus the "Antifederals" on the eve of the ratification of the US Constitution.

It's not every day that you read a book about American history that casts Abigail Adams as a villain. Perhaps "villain" is too strong a word, but in *Unruly Americans*, Woody Holton's analysis of the origins of the Constitution, Adams appears again and again as a spokeswoman for antidemocratic elites. And not just any antidemocratic elites. The elites being attacked here were the speculators in government bonds and currency who, Holton argues, demanded, framed, defended and won the adoption of the US Constitution—for the forthright purpose of reversing the democratizing effects of the American Revolution. Abigail Adams is best known for urging husband John to "remember the ladies" in 1776, but Holton tells us about the Adams of the mid-1780s: a hard-headed businesswoman, an avid speculator and an articulate expositor of the classic shibboleth of investors that astronomical windfall profits are only their due.

Like everyone else who has ever written about the origin of the Constitution, Holton, a professor of history at the University of Richmond, sees very high stakes in how Americans look back on the politics of the 1780s. He is not so worried about the views of the relatively uninformed Americans who routinely confuse the Constitution with the Declaration of Independence. Holton points out, as historians always do, that the Constitution contains none of the Declaration's soaring language about "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," though he goes a bit further than usual in evoking the sinister character of the Constitution's aspiration to "insure domestic tranquility." He considers a government that is strong enough to crush popular violence to be inherently elitist, mainly because his idea of popular violence emphasizes events like Shays's Rebellion in Massachusetts and the tradition of slave rebellions from Dunmore's Ethiopian Regiment during the Revolutionary War to the Nat Turner rebellion in 1831 and John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859. If Holton's examples included the antiabolitionist riots of the 1830s, the anti-Catholic riots of the 1840s, racist pogroms like the New York City Draft Riot of 1863 and the terrorism that was so rampant in the South for a century after the Civil War (not least the lynchings), a government that could "insure domestic tranquility" might look rather better.

Holton's real target is less the misty-eyed view of a democratic Constitution than the view of the more informed Americans—especially scholars—who agree that the Constitution was not democratic but side with the pro-Constitution Federalists anyway. In this Federalist view, the Constitution rescued the United States from an economic crisis that threatened its very survival. The causes of the economic crisis, in this telling, lay in the fact that during the mid-1780s incompetent plebeians controlled the state governments and gave their constituents what they wanted—relief from crushing taxes and onerous debts. Because nobody could discipline such "irresponsible" behavior under the feckless Articles of Confederation, the elites mobilized their considerable political and intellectual talents to replace the Articles with a better government in what was essentially a coup d'état. In this story, which Holton sees as prevailing among historians today, the Constitution was the handiwork of an energetic and talented elite who rescued the United States from democracy.

Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution
By Woody Holton.
Hill and Wang. 370 pp. $27.

What's dangerous about this narrative, Holton argues, is that it grants "well-to-do and well-educated Americans a breezy sense of political entitlement" while exerting "just the opposite effect on ordinary citizens, chipping away at their self-confidence." Would that historians had such a direct impact on the public! It's hard to believe that ordinary citizens can possibly lose their political self-confidence because of an interpretation of the history of the 1780s when there are so many more proximate problems—from Diebold voting machines to felon disenfranchisement, *Bush v. Gore* and the other ways majority rule has been systematically undermined in the contemporary United States.

What Holton really wants is for Americans to understand that we have a grander political tradition than constitutionalism, a democratic tradition in which "ordinary farmers" used tangible power to win tangible gains. He recognizes that the farmers he is celebrating were white men who could meet property qualifications for voting and office holding, but he still considers them to be ordinary enough (and it is hard to disagree) that their ability to defy the shrieking complaints of financial elites to craft their own economic policies can be inspirational. It is

Robin Einhorn teaches history at the University of California, Berkeley, and is the author of American Taxation, American Slavery.

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almost as if Holton were assuring us that we really can elect populists who can then defeat entrenched interests like banks and insurance companies—no matter how loudly or haughtily the talking heads of the media conglomerates disagree.

One problem with this inspirational tale is that the unruly Americans Holton celebrates actually did not win, if we define winning the way he does. For Holton, they would have won if the United States had retained the highly democratic representative arrangements that existed in some states in the mid-1780s: direct and preferably annual elections, large legislative bodies chosen from small districts, legislative supremacy secured by a weak or nonexistent executive and a broad suffrage. The Constitution established the opposite: large districts for the House of Representatives (the first House had only sixty-five members) and the flagrantly antidemocratic three-fifths rule to inflate Southern representation; indirect election of senators by the state legislatures for staggered six-year terms; and a veto-wielding President allowed an unlimited number of four-year terms and chosen by an Electoral College that included the three-fifths boost for the South (since each state's electoral vote was based, as it still is, on the size of its House delegation plus its two senators). Toss in the federal courts and the clauses barring states from printing money or impairing contracts, and the result was a rout of Holton's version of democracy. Add to this the fact that the Philadelphia convention had never been authorized to write a new Constitution, and that its ratification procedure blatantly violated the amendment rule in the Articles of Confederation, which could be amended only by the unanimous consent of the state legislatures, and the result is quite literally a coup.

Holton admits that the supporters of the Constitution included some people who were not bond-holding speculators. Western settlers wanted a national government strong enough to fight Indians and expropriate more of their land. Residents of states without major ports wanted to stop paying their neighbors' taxes when they bought imports (for instance, when Connecticut residents bought goods on which New York or Rhode Island had levied tariffs, as they did until the Constitution granted Congress a monopoly on this form of taxation). Holton even concedes that the elites were right to emphasize the benefits the United States would enjoy once it established a financial environment safe enough to attract foreign investment.

Most important, the Constitution delivered the comprehensive tax relief that the "ordinary farmers" who populate *Unruly Americans* had fought so hard for and sometimes won in their states under the Articles of Confederation. Or, more precisely, Alexander Hamilton's plan for handling the Revolutionary War debt delivered this tax relief. Hamilton's plan to fund government bonds at face value, even though most were held by speculators (like Abigail Adams) who had bought them in depreciated currency for pennies on the dollar, certainly handed windfall profits to some lucky investors. His plan for the federal government to "assume" the war debts of the states amplified these windfalls by including more speculative investments in the boon.

Holton is always upbeat, despite his account of the Constitution's antidemocratic character.

But the very same programs also slashed the tremendously onerous tax burdens that some states had been imposing when they thought they had to deal with the costs of the Revolutionary War on their own. The state taxes, levied mainly on polls and property (supplemented by import taxes in a few states), were burdensome not only in their amount but also in their form: they had to be paid in lump sums and in "hard" money that was almost impossible to obtain. Taxpayers who could not pay these taxes, for whatever reason, risked losing their property to foreclosure. This, of course, was the farmers' worst nightmare. By shifting the burden of the war debt from these state taxes to a federal government that could raise large sums with relative ease at the nation's ports, Hamilton's program paired the speculators' bonanza with a powerful dose of relief for the "ordinary" American taxpayer.

Despite the dark nature of Holton's analysis of the antidemocratic origin and character of the Constitution, the tone of *Unruly Americans* is relentlessly upbeat. It is true that the lifelong and articulate rebel Herman Husband, here cast in the hero's role as opposite number to the villainous Abigail Adams, died shortly after (and possibly because) he spent six months in jail for participating in the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. Holton is also enraged that the framers often get the credit for the Bill of Rights, even though they opposed it until it was forced on them as the price of ratification of the Constitution. And, in addition, there is Holton's denunciation of the historians who browbeat ordinary citizens by citing the Articles of Confederation era as proof that "the people" cannot govern without elite supervision.

Even so, *Unruly Americans* brims with optimism. Most of the book is a celebration of the democracy that gets defeated in the end. Holton manages this feat by devoting almost the entire work to the couple of years when the "ordinary" farmer seemed to be winning. You simply can't read *Unruly Americans* without admiring the depth of Holton's research into the financial and political debates of this brief period in the mid-1780s. Currency depreciation, bond speculation, economic policy, the war debt: these are the subjects that the players in Holton's story most wanted to argue about—and did argue about in the greatest detail. Although this discourse lends Holton's work its rhetorical richness, his reliance on it leads him to ignore the question that has dominated much of the most recent historical writing about the origin of the Constitution—the influence of slavery, not least in helping to load the document with the very antidemocratic provisions that Holton criticizes. This was a subject that the players in Holton's story most definitely did not want to discuss. Thus, while Holton makes the obligatory bows to the struggles of African-Americans against slavery and of Indians against land grabs, his noticing these issues does not alter the inexorably traditional—and at times quite repetitive—way he tells his main story.

Holton's adoption of a kind of faux-naïve tone when referring to the work of other historians—as if he were saying, Gee whiz, the debate over the Constitution was nothing like what they taught me in school—can be maddening. Yet it makes a certain kind of sense, since the historians with whom he is most deeply engaged are Charles Beard and Merrill Jensen (Beard's most important disciple). Beard's pathbreaking *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* appeared in 1913, while Jensen's most influential work, *The Articles of Confederation*, appeared in 1940. Holton is in a constant debate with Beard and Jensen about the details, but he is writing squarely in the "economic" tradition they established and coming to essentially the same conclusion: the Constitution's adoption was the climax of a long and bitter class conflict in the early Republic. The crucial characteristic of this class conflict is that it was nationwide, looking pretty much the same in Massachusetts

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By John Fleming

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and Virginia, Pennsylvania and South Carolina, Connecticut and Georgia. This conflict ended in a victory of the rich over the poor, the creditors over the debtors and the merchants over the farmers and artisans. The Constitution was, in this sense, the American Thermidor, the triumphant conclusion of a long struggle, in Holton's words, "to put the democratic genie back in the bottle."

As Staughton Lynd noticed decades ago, this thoroughly traditional story about the economic origin of the Constitution is based on a profoundly skewed portrait of the eighteenth-century class structure—a portrait that originated as a bit of partisan spin in the 1790s. Through the timeless strategies of rhetorical framing and on-the-ground organizing, the most talented politicians of the era, Thomas Jefferson and his allies, sold Americans the story about a nationwide class conflict in a way that wrote slavery out of the picture of early American politics almost completely. But this was a society that enslaved one-fifth of its population. And, more important for questions of political power, it was a society with a North that enslaved only 2 percent of its population and a South that enslaved one-third of its own. By defining the American "elite" as consisting of a small group of Northern merchants and speculators, and defining "the people" as everyone else (that is, all other white males), the Jeffersonians worked out a partisan way of talking about class conflict that let the owners of dozens or even hundreds of people appear to be members of the oppressed plebeian class—especially when they did not want to (or could not) pay their debts. Holton never questions this slavery-erasing portrait of nationwide class conflict. On this, he is with Beard and Jensen against Lynd as well as Leonard Richards, Paul Finkelman, Mark Graber and others who find Southern concern for the protection of slavery to be critical in the debates over the Constitution, even when the participants wanted to be talking about bonds, debts, taxes and currency.

Nor does Holton ask whether there were systematic differences in the state-level constitutional rules he uses to assess democracy. He writes as if a Massachusetts example were interchangeable with a Virginia example, and so on. He is dead wrong about this. The Northern governments actually were much more democratic than the Southern governments, with many more officials elected rather than appointed, and with the elected officials chosen more directly and on the basis of a broader suffrage. The politicians from these more democratic Northern states may well have supported the Constitution to discipline the "irresponsible" state legislatures, but they had not inherited their political positions in the almost literal manner of the South, where careers often began with an appointment by friends of fathers to a local office that would have been popularly elected in the North.

However misleading Holton's story of nationwide class conflict in the 1780s might be, it does have a rhetorical virtue. It is the easiest way to write with optimism and confidence about democracy in American history and to use American history to legitimate further democratizations. Beard's attack on the elitism of the framers helped legitimize the Progressive Era constitutional amendments, including the direct election of senators, women's suffrage and the income tax (though also Prohibition). Holton's message to Americans today—and it looks like we just might be on the verge of another period of democratizing change—is to remember that democracy has sometimes actually happened in the United States. Still, the fact that he has to downplay slavery to do this reminds us why it is hard for historians to dress up as cheerleaders, even for the causes in which we most ardently believe. ■

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A police officer shakes his fist in warning at WPA strikers in front of WPA headquarters in Oakland, California, April 1, 1937.

Hard Times

by KIM PHILLIPS-FEIN

The Forgotten Man
A New History of the Great Depression.
By Amity Shlaes.
HarperCollins. 464 pp. $26.95.

In 1883 Yale professor William Graham Sumner published an essay titled "The Forgotten Man." Sumner was the most prominent American advocate of social Darwinism, and his article reflected the conviction that economic inequality was a natural, inevitable and benign result of the competition for survival. Sumner thought that any attempt to ameliorate the lives of "the poor" and "the weak" would limit the impersonal, harsh but ultimately improving force of natural selection. Even worse, the social cost of passing laws to improve working conditions or crafting government policies to help the indigent would always be borne by the "forgotten man"—the industrious, decent and apolitical American whose freedom would be hemmed in by government regulations and whose salary would be taxed for social services.

In April 1932 a speechwriter for Frank-

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lin Delano Roosevelt placed Sumner's phrase (likely without remembering its origins) in the middle of a radio address given by the governor of New York as he campaigned for the presidency against Herbert Hoover. The Depression, which had begun with the precipitous stock market crash of October 1929, still held the nation in its grip. Unemployment for the country as a whole was more than 20 percent; in cities like Detroit, close to one-third of the labor force lacked work. Those Americans lucky enough to still have jobs saw their wages fall and their hours cut back. More than 25,000 businesses failed each year in the early 1930s. In his speech, Roosevelt focused on the "Main Street" of farmers and homeowners and miners and factory workers, promising to help "the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid." Hoover, he argued, was providing "temporary relief from the top down," whereas he would give "permanent relief from the bottom up."

Amity Shlaes's history of the Great Depression borrows its title from Sumner's essay as much as from Roosevelt's speech. Published last spring, seventy-five years after Roosevelt's election, *The Forgotten Man* is nothing less than an attempt to reclaim the history of the 1930s for the free market. Shlaes, a syndicated columnist for Bloomberg News and formerly a columnist at the *Financial Times*, insists that the New Deal actually prolonged the economic misery of the '30s—unemployment never fell under 13 percent during the decade, and after declining from its peak in the early '30s, it actually rose again during the decade's final years. The grand initiatives of the New Deal—the National Recovery Administration, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Wagner Act—all created a climate of economic uncertainty, discouraging businesses from investing. The deepest problem of the decade, she writes, was "the intervention, the lack of faith in the marketplace. Government management of the late 1920s and 1930s hurt the economy." Meddling reformers dared to tamper with the market, and the "forgotten men" paid the price: "From 1929 to 1940, from Hoover to Roosevelt, government intervention helped make the Depression Great."

The Forgotten Man is a narrative history woven around the exploits of a group of characters Shlaes deems the "people whom the New Deal forgot and hurt." She chronicles the travails of Wendell Willkie, president of the utilities company Commonwealth and Southern, as he fought the TVA, which competed with his company in the South. (Willkie ultimately challenged Roosevelt for the presidency in 1940, a thankless mission if there ever was one.) She tells the story of Andrew Mellon, the steel magnate and former Treasury Secretary who donated the paintings that became the National Gallery in an effort to demonstrate that private accumulations of wealth were in fact in the public interest: "The only reason his art collection was so great was that he was supremely wealthy," Shlaes says. She explains the struggle of the Schechters, the humble kosher butchers whose Supreme Court case (*Schechter Poultry Corp v. the U.S.*) toppled the National Recovery Administration, the early New Deal attempt to relax antitrust laws and permit companies to collaborate in setting wages and prices in the hope of stabilizing the economy. Father Divine, the religious leader who preached the gospel of self-improvement, makes an appearance, as does Bill Wilson, the stock analyst who founded Alcoholics Anonymous. None of these are exactly obscure figures. But Shlaes believes they represented an alternative response to the Depression—one grounded in individual initiative and the support of local voluntary groups (AA being an example of the latter)

A river is more than an amenity, it is a treasure.

- Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes

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rather than state projects like the TVA and the Works Progress Administration. Most histories of the era, she contends, glorify the grand government initiatives of the decade, eschewing the quieter stories of these private efforts to cope with the Depression.

Central to Shlaes's case is the provocative argument that the American economy was basically sound during the 1920s. The meteoric rise of the stock market was not the sign of a speculative bubble but instead a reflection of underlying strengths. If only the feds had had the sense to leave well enough alone, the recession that followed the crash of 1929 would have been shorter and far less severe. She begins her story with a comparison between Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover. Coolidge, in her view, was a New England country lawyer, while Hoover was an educated mining engineer, a man of the world. (Shlaes boils down their character differences to the fact that Coolidge fished with worms, Hoover with artificial flies.) In the 1920s, Coolidge left the economy alone, believing that "the work of life lay in holding back and shutting out." The result was unemployment below 5 percent and rapid economic growth.

Then the "priggish" Hoover, whom Shlaes sees as temperamentally inclined toward government intervention, took office. After the stock market decline, Hoover was fond of calling White House meetings with businessmen to urge their restraint in cutting wages and firing workers, a tactic that many historians have criticized as an example of Hoover's inability to confront the Depression. Shlaes presents it as evidence that Hoover pursued heavy-handed intervention: "To force business to go on spending when it did not want to was to hurt business." There was, of course, little force involved—but Shlaes would have preferred Coolidge's silent retreat. Hoover did initiate some of the programs that Roosevelt developed further, like the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, which helped shore up failing banks. But Shlaes implies that if only Hoover had pursued a policy of prudent restraint the crisis might have blown over quickly, a "bad quarter of an hour," in Mellon's phrase. To believe that the American economy in 1930 was undone by Hoover's tentative steps toward intervention fails to account for the real economic problems the country faced: the sharply unequal distribution of income, the weak consumer market, the crazy speculative schemes and rampant borrowing that financed the stock market boom, the fragility of the banking system and the agricultural crisis shaking the Midwest.

If the economy would have recovered soon enough if only left alone, then the call for federal economic intervention makes the New Dealers look ridiculous. Shlaes presents the New Dealers as a group of well-meaning ideologues, drawn to social experimentation, almost gleeful at the chance to use the Depression as a lab to test their theories. In her introduction, she differentiates herself from other conservative scholars by saying that she rejects the idea that Communists infiltrated the New Deal. Yet she can't restrain herself from introducing her leading liberal characters (including Rexford Tugwell, who would be an adviser to Roosevelt throughout the decade) by describing a trip they made to Moscow in 1927 to learn what they could about a managed economy. During the 1920s, these progressives were despondent, unable to enjoy the country's new prosperity; as Tugwell put it, "We were…all but regarded as social misfits." When they found themselves in power, they had no idea what to do, and Shlaes describes the result as a comedy of errors—everything the Brain Trust did only undermined its broader goal of ending the Depression.

> If the New Deal was a failure, then why did it produce such an enduring political realignment?

Shlaes is, of course, correct that the New Deal failed to restore economic health. She is also right that the Roosevelt Administration was far from consistent or coherent in its attempts to cope with the Depression, although she does not really address (as historians like Alan Brinkley have) the changes in the New Deal over the decade. Roosevelt and his advisers relinquished the ideas about the destructive force of capitalist competition that the ill-fated National Recovery Administration was meant to tame and took up a Keynesian program of managing consumer demand to ensure economic health. Shlaes's arguments about the reluctance of businessmen to invest during the Depression years actually echo those of Roosevelt during the recession of 1937—the President and some of his advisers blamed a "capital strike" for the rising unemployment of the late 1930s. (Others argued that the attempt to balance the government budget that year was responsible, a thesis Shlaes does not mention.)

But in the end there is little historical evidence for her larger claim that the New Deal made the Depression worse and that without it, the crisis would simply have passed. After all, the catastrophe of the 1930s was halted not by private industry but by the massive public spending generated to fight World War II—an outlay of government resources far greater than anything Roosevelt had initially imagined. The fall in unemployment during the buildup to the war seemed proof of the central principles of Keynesianism: the private economy cannot always spend its way out of a depression; sometimes public spending is needed to stimulate growth. The experience of the war seemed to validate the New Deal, not disprove it. If anything, it suggested that Roosevelt should have gone further—that the New Deal was compromised by his timidity, not his radicalism. Does Shlaes seriously think that the Depression would have melted away if only Calvin Coolidge had been President? Was Alcoholics Anonymous really an alternative to the New Deal?

And if the New Deal was such a failure, why did it produce one of the most enduring political realignments of the century? In particular, how did Roosevelt win the loyalty of millions of voters, many of whom had never voted before? Shlaes dismisses FDR's electoral success by arguing that he was a master of cynical politicking. She suggests that he won re-election in 1936 (taking every state in the nation except Maine and Vermont) because he invented a "new kind of interest-group politics." Roosevelt "made groups where only individual citizens or isolated cranks had stood before," gave those groups financial benefits and won votes for it. Social Security and the Wagner Act, in her mind, were little more than crass bids to win working-class support in the 1936 election. But she does not really reckon with the obvious counterargument: that Roosevelt's electoral success reflected support for the New Deal in a larger ideological and political sense—that people gave their endorsement to the broad project of providing working-class people with minimal economic security during downturns that no policy-maker fully understood how to control. For the New Deal was not only about stimulating the economy; it was also an attempt to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, the aged and the unemployed, a goal that many New Dealers

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saw as distinct from restoring economic growth. They wanted to rescue capitalism (Roosevelt often seemed surprised by how much hostility businessmen expressed toward his program), but they also wanted to change the way that it worked.

In the end, the Depression itself cannot help but intrude on Shlaes's optimism about the free market. Now and then, a few characters besides Mellon and the Schechters and Father Divine appear in her account, like the young couple from New York City who retreated to a Catskills cabin in 1931 to starve to death because they were too ashamed to beg, and the 13-year-old boy who hanged himself in Brooklyn in 1937 after watching the gas in his family's home get shut off, a story Shlaes uses to begin her book. The economic breakdown of the 1930s made faith in the benevolence of business almost impossible during the decade. Shlaes may interpret these stories as demonstrating the failures of the New Deal, but at the time people saw them as evidence of the limits of the market.

For Shlaes, the New Deal was a scheme hatched by well-meaning reformers to carry out their good intentions and grand schemes, paying for their "big projects" with the tax money of the common man. But during the 1930s, millions of forgotten men became involved in politics themselves. The entire New Deal project, as Shlaes presents it, was carried out from above, by the President and the gang of intellectuals and dreamers gathered around him. But American society was shaken during the decade by political explosions: the birth of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the eviction protests and hunger marches and sit-down strikes, the growth of the Communist Party and other radical groups. Economic depression does not always lead to political mobilization—but in the 1930s, it did. (Reading *The Forgotten Man*, you'd never know that the vibrant and tragicomic world of radical idealism, delusion and commitment memorably chronicled by writers like Edmund Wilson and Alfred Kazin ever existed.) The law professors and economists and the generation of old Progressives who worked with Roosevelt to craft New Deal legislation did so under pressure from people who in ordinary times might have stayed away from politics but who found themselves during the Great Depression facing economic circumstances that their local and community institutions could not ameliorate, that their old faiths in self-reliance could not contain. Because Shlaes interprets the New Deal as little more than the experiment of a jaded political class,

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she cannot really look at the popular protest of the decade, let alone assess the ways it shaped legislation.

Throughout the 1940s and '50s, conservatives openly criticized the New Deal. Today, it is unusual for an author like Shlaes to devote much attention to the decade of the Depression. The New Deal is more often invoked by liberal writers, who describe the political economy of the 1950s and '60s—which the New Deal helped to create—as an example of the kind of mixed economy that might produce a more egalitarian society today. Frequently it is remembered uncritically as a kind of political pastoral, an image quite different from the one people on the left and even liberals held during the years that followed the end of World War II. Then, many liberal writers criticized the postwar order. John Kenneth Galbraith excoriated the self-absorbed mass consumption of the "affluent society," in which the public sector was devoted primarily to stockpiling weaponry for the fight against Communism. Michael Harrington reminded a complacent nation of the continued reality of poverty. New Left scholars pointed out the ways that corporations were able to seize hold of liberal institutions, while the civil rights movement made clear how little the New Deal had done to confront racism. It is only in recent years, as the minimal protections of liberalism have been rolled back, that the New Deal has started to enjoy such uncritical acclaim. But its contemporary enthusiasts—see Robert Kuttner's recent *The Squandering of America* for one interesting example of the genre—actually have something in common with Shlaes, as surprising as that may seem. To treat the New Deal primarily as a legislative toolkit or as a set of policy initiatives means abandoning the very culture of outrage that matters most about the 1930s. To paraphrase historian Lizabeth Cohen, it means making the very people who truly made the New Deal once more into forgotten men. ■

Extreme Inequality

by DANIEL BROOK

In 2006 two economists turned their critical faculties on a surprising phenomenon: diplomatic parking tickets in New York City. The pair found remarkable variation among the diplomatic corps of different countries. Kuwait's UN delegation led the pack, racking up an astounding 246 tickets per diplomat between 1997 and 2002. At the other end of the spectrum, Denmark's diplomats didn't get a single ticket. The economists discerned that the number of parking tickets per delegation tracked with Transparency International's corruption index. Diplomats from high-corruption countries like Kuwait got loads of tickets; those from low-corruption countries like Denmark got few or none.

What the economists failed to note is that corruption itself tracks with another phenomenon—a nation's level of economic inequality. Dramatically unequal countries like Kuwait tend to be hideously corrupt. Countries like Denmark—by most measures, the most economically egalitarian country in the world—tend to be honest and transparent. Because of the principle of diplomatic immunity, even the careless Kuwaitis were not technically breaking any laws. Still, their parking violations speak volumes about their sense of social cohesion, or what strangers owe one another as members of civil society.

It's this type of elite misbehavior—self-serving though not always technically illegal—to which David Cay Johnston turns in *Free Lunch*. Johnston is a Pulitzer Prize–winning tax reporter at the *New York Times*. His recent articles have exposed the gaping economic inequality of George W. Bush's America and given the lie to the apologists' explanation that the new inequality stems from globalization or increasing returns to education. His analysis of tax data, which he recapitulates in *Free Lunch*, shows that it is not merely the poor and middle class who are being left behind. Even those Americans in the ninety-fifth and ninety-ninth percentiles on the income scale haven't received outsized economic benefits over the past twenty-five years. The only people leaping ahead in winner-take-all America are in the top 1 percent—and more specifically the top .1 and .01 percents. In a sense, it's not surprising to see Johnston's work in the *Times*. Even its well-educated readership is just treading water in this economy. The big winners read the *Wall Street Journal*.

Johnston's contention is an audacious one: the level of inequality and corruption in contemporary America puts us in league not with our putative economic peers, Canada, Europe and Japan, but with Brazil, Mexico and Russia, countries "in which adults have the right to vote, but real political power is wielded by a relatively narrow, and rich, segment of the population." And, as in these unequal "democracies," American elites routinely raid the public purse rather than rely on the free market to succeed. Since the "Reagan revolution," and under the guise of privatization, deregulation and "market-based solutions," wealthy interests have set up a system that Johnston dubs "corporate socialism," in which they succeed through monopoly, public subsidy and even outright theft rather than through competition. And this rigged system, Johnston argues, is what's driving the new inequality off the charts. "Subsidy economics," he writes, "is at the core of the economic malaise felt for so long by a majority of Americans."

Early in *Free Lunch*, Johnston's lumping of the United States with Brazil, Mexico and Russia sounds inflammatory, even irresponsible, but the more one reads of his litany of plutocratic shenanigans, the less far-fetched it sounds. Johnston's story of an oligarch getting $100 million in corporate welfare to open a call center filled with dead-end jobs in a frozen postindustrial city and then getting laudatory coverage in the local paper, which said oligarch owns, sounds right out of Putin's Russia. But the Frost Belt city isn't Vladivostok, and the oligarch isn't Boris Berezovsky—it's Buffalo and Warren Buffett.

As an investigative reporter, Johnston is a big-game hunter. He skewers popular plutocrats like Buffett, digs up the dirt on the unsavory sources of Paris Hilton's fortune and details Apple executive Steve Jobs's backdated stock options thievery. Some of these

Free Lunch
How the Wealthiest Americans Enrich Themselves at Government Expense (and Stick You With the Bill).
By David Cay Johnston.
Portfolio. 323 pp. $24.95.

The Politics of Inequality
A Political History of the Idea of Economic Inequality in America.
By Michael J. Thompson.
Columbia. 249 pp. $32.50.

Daniel Brook's first book, The Trap: Selling Out to Stay Afloat in Winner-Take-All America, *will be reissued in paperback in April.*

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stories are well-known—Enron's market manipulation, for example—but Johnston's reporting makes the outrage boil over anyway. Unfortunately, the outrage sends Johnston's prose into overdrive. His description of "government giveaways [that] flourish like weeds on Miracle-Gro" makes you wish he'd shown his copy to some strait-laced editors at the *Times* or even stuck with the standard cliché, "pop up like mushrooms."

It is Johnston's investigative skills, however, that distinguish the book from the usual social critic's rant. He does his homework, crunches the numbers and makes astonishing discoveries. For example, the sporting goods chain Cabela's, a leading purveyor of hunting equipment (and Dick Cheney's favorite place to shop), earned $223.4 million in profits between 2004 and 2006 while soaking up at least $293.7 million in subsidies on its Nebraska stores alone. Playing one small town against another, Cabela's arranged deals to waive property taxes, let the company pocket sales taxes and even get free land for its stores and distribution centers. In a very real sense, Johnston shows, Cabela's is in the corporate welfare business, not the sporting goods business.

Johnston also profiles a mom-and-pop sporting goods store in tiny Hamburg, Pennsylvania, put out of business when a Cabela's comes to town. The reporting is vivid, but the analysis is weak. This is indeed a case of unfair competition, but Johnston argues that in a system of fair competition, mom-and-pop stores would do just fine. A dogged reporter, he's dug up a case of a mom-and-pop that can beat the big chain on price. But is such a comparison typical? There are plenty of reasons to oppose the big-box behemoths, but high prices is rarely one of them. With their economies of scale, chains can usually undercut independent stores without resorting to corporate welfare.

So Johnston ends up arguing, in effect, that laissez faire would be fair. But would it? He repeatedly makes references to how much Adam Smith would object if he could see our system, where "corporate socialists" troll Washington and the state capitols for favors rather than competing on the open market. Perhaps this is purely rhetorical—a way to appeal to a country where Smith is arguably more revered than the actual founders of the country. But is objecting to plutocracy in America on the grounds that it's not Smithian really the most effective way to combat the new inequality? And is crony capitalism really the main source of the new inequality? It's true that American crony capitalism produces even more inequality than a Smithian laissez-faire system would. But Smith's laissez faire would still concentrate money in the hands of a few. That's what unregulated capitalism does. The new inequality is the result both of market-based reforms that are implemented honestly and those implemented dishonestly.

Johnston seems to believe that our country is becoming unequal because it is corrupt, not that it is becoming corrupt because it is unequal. Certainly corruption and inequality are mutually reinforcing phenomena, but the causation generally runs from inequality to corruption. Rather than conjure up a Johnstonian metaphor here, let's just say he's putting the cart before the horse.

In a sense, Johnston's book is exactly the type of angry but ultimately ineffectual analysis that Michael Thompson, an assistant professor at William Paterson University, takes aim at in *The Politics of Inequality*. Why, Thompson asks, is the critique of inequality—so salient for the first 200 years of American history—falling flat today, when inequality is as bad as it's ever been? To take on the new inequality, Thompson argues, we must rediscover the older tradition of critiquing inequality from a small-r republican perspective. In this line of thinking, the problem with inequality is not so much that it is unfair for so few to have so much while so many have so little, or even that inequality undermines formal democratic politics. Rather, it's that high degrees of economic inequality undermine democratic society itself, the society of equals. "Western political thought, from the writings of Plato on through those of John Dewey, saw economic inequality as dangerous…not out of a liberal concern for 'fairness' or opportunity but because it marked divisions that threatened a culture of equality and freedom," Thompson writes. Thus, when Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis reputedly warned, "We can have a democracy in this country or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of the few. We cannot have both," he was not offering an opinion. He was stating a fact. We can be a republic or we can be a society where elites park in front of the fire hydrants.

Ever since the beginnings of democracy, Thompson explains, political thinkers have understood that a democratic society can not endure under conditions of extreme inequality. There was broad agreement on this principle. The difference between left and right was not that progressive thinkers opposed extreme inequality and conservative theorists supported it. Rather, left and right differed only on why they feared inequality. Left thinkers worried that in a system of extreme inequality, the conspiratorial rich would subvert the forms of democracy for

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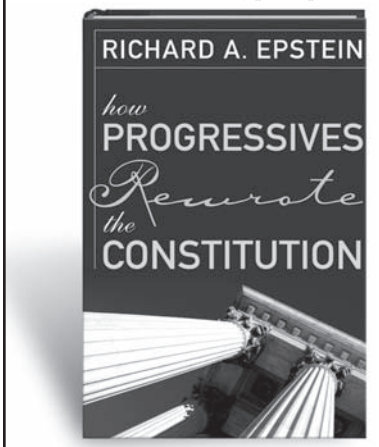

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their own self-interested ends. You can hear this fear in Thomas Jefferson's warning that "I hope we shall crush in its birth the aristocracy of our moneyed corporations which dare already to challenge our government." Right-leaning thinkers worried that extreme inequality would push the poor to rise up and lead to mob rule—John Adams's fear of the "lawless, tyrannical rabble." Centrists like Aristotle were equally fearful of rich and poor. The Athenian philosopher thought that under unequal economic conditions, the poor view the system as a conspiracy against them and see no reason to follow the rules; similarly, the rich come to feel that they are better than their fellow citizens and see themselves as above the law. The key to a stable republic, Aristotle discerned, is a large and stable middle class. This understanding was hardly limited to philosophical idealists flitting about in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. Even Machiavelli, the consummate pragmatist, not known for his sentimental attachments to abstract ideals, argued that a republic could endure only under conditions of relative economic equality; otherwise, corruption or revolution would ensue.

For 2,000 years, hardly anyone thought extreme inequality was tenable in a republic. So while William Greider has described (in these pages) the New Right agenda as "rolling back the twentieth century," it is even more audacious than that—it is to roll back Western civilization (or perhaps human civilization, period, for even Confucius warned, "Where wealth is centralized, the people are dispersed. Where wealth is distributed, the people are brought together"). While Aristotle began Western political thought with his insight that "man is by nature a political animal," Margaret Thatcher sought to end it: "Who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families."

Admittedly, in American political thought there has always been a counterargument that high degrees of economic inequality, if established under conditions of open competition, could coexist with democracy. Thompson traces this tradition from Alexander Hamilton through John C. Calhoun to Milton Friedman. But none of these thinkers, so sanguine about the risks inequality poses to democracy, were particularly committed to democracy. Hamilton humiliated himself on the floor of the Constitutional Convention by arguing that what the new nation really needed was a "monarch"; Calhoun was America's leading intellectual apologist for slavery; Milton Friedman advised Chilean dictator Gen. Augusto Pinochet. The only thinkers who dismiss extreme inequality as no threat to democratic society appear to be, at best, indifferent to democracy.

Considering the brevity of Thompson's sketches—Plato is discussed in six pages, Machiavelli in one—academics may dismiss the book as drive-by intellectual history. But if anything, the book is not broad enough. Why limit discussion to political philosophers simply because a balkanized academy calls for it? Why not analyze political rhetoric—the free-labor ideology of Lincoln's Republican Party, for example—and religious thought? To what extent is our embrace of inequality rooted in our Puritan forebears' transformation of the religion of Jesus, in which worldly wealth was a barrier to salvation ("It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God") for a faith in which worldly wealth was a sign of salvation?

How, after 2,000 years of broad agreement that extreme levels of economic inequality were anathema to self-rule, does one explain the United States, an ostensibly democratic country where the concentration of wealth exceeds not only those of our peer countries but that of imperial Rome? Thompson blames this on the triumph of liberalism, with its emphasis on individual rights and equal opportunity, over republicanism, with its emphasis on civic virtue, social equality and the absence of domination. Conventionally seen as being in tension, liberalism and republicanism, Thompson argues, were initially aligned in their opposition to feudalism. Early American liberals assumed that an economy of open competition would lead to reasonable levels of economic equality. After all, every person had the capacity to work; freed from the constraints of feudalism, each worker could keep the fruits of his labor.

In the early American economy of small farms and shops, this idea seemed reasonable. What liberals didn't understand was that in the industrial economy of large corporations that would develop after the Civil War, work and reward would again be separated. In the feudal system, serfs worked land owned by nobles; nobles got rich while serfs remained poor. Under industrial capitalism, workers work in corporations owned by industrialists and shareholders, who similarly get rich while workers often get shortchanged. Blindsided by the rise of industrial capitalism, with its bifurcation of work and reward, liberalism was impotent to take on the inequality of the first Gilded Age or its re-emergence in the second Gilded Age today. While a liberal ideology of open competition has been able to take on racial and gender inequality, it has nothing to offer against the scourge of economic inequality. Capitalism's Smithian system of seemingly free and open competition is a mechanism for generating extreme economic inequality. Until liberals understand this—including liberals like David Cay Johnston—there is little chance of rolling back the new inequality.

Thompson urges broader criticism of inequality than analysis of the economic gains of the top 1 percent or how the rich monopolize government power. He writes of the "decline of civic engagement, the erosion of political life, and the shattering of a once vibrant public sphere" that ensues under condi-

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tions of extreme inequality. At its best moments, *Free Lunch* explores these themes, as when Johnston describes the fate of urban park systems under privatization. (In Los Angeles, where user fees have replaced tax funding, parks in poor neighborhoods rot while those in posh areas shine.) Thompson's book is not a work of reporting, but the quotes he unearths from thinkers describing unequal societies of times past do seem to offer glimpses of our own time. Matthew Arnold's description of a Dickensian England in which extreme inequality is "materializing our upper class, vulgarizing our middle class, and brutalizing our lower class" certainly sounds prescient. "This is to fail in civilization," Arnold concludes. And when Thompson quotes Montesquieu as saying, "In monarchies and despotic governments, nobody aims at equality…they all aspire to superiority. People of the very lowest condition desire to emerge from their obscurity only to lord it over their fellow-subjects," you can't help but think of the French baron in powdered wig and tights, notebook in hand, wandering the streets of Las Vegas, past casinos and pawn shops.

Though Thompson provides a great service in revisiting—and reviving—the tradition of seeing extreme economic inequality and democracy as incompatible, the Montesquieu quote raises a dark truth the author never fully confronts. While it would be comforting to assume that extreme inequality would naturally lead to popular demands for greater equality, in highly unequal societies, people often aspire not to roll back inequality but to benefit from it. How to turn a nation of gamblers into a nation of citizens is the question that looms over America. ■

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Blind Orion Searching for the Rising Sun (1658)

Just Looking

by ARTHUR C. DANTO

I had never, until quite recently, been able to work up much enthusiasm for Nicholas Poussin's art, despite the fact that friends whose judgment I respect—David Carrier and the late Richard Wollheim, philosophers and art critics both—have esteemed no artist more highly. A few months ago, however, an invitation arrived to the press opening of an exhibition of Poussin's landscapes, and it featured a reproduction of one of his late paintings, which struck me as so beautiful that I fell in love with it immediately—like Tamino with the portrait of Pamina in *The Magic Flute*. What could I have been using for eyes? The beauty was immediate and global. Nothing in the painting compelled me to love it, though its depiction of an immense field of golden grain illuminated by a dramatic sky was at once luminous and breathless. When I looked more closely, I found details that put me off, but they somehow didn't diminish the work's beauty.

Poussin, who died in 1665, is viewed as a difficult artist, mostly because of the dense screen of allusions that falls like a cataract between viewer and painting. How can one respond to his work without mastering the

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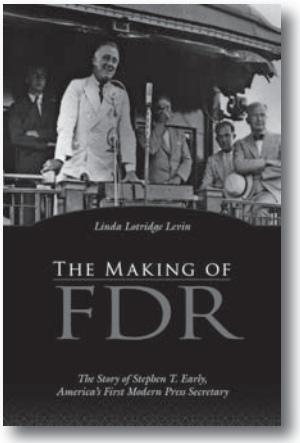

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—The Economist

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specialized literature on his sources, artistic and intellectual, and his subtexts? Recently, T.J. Clark, a formidable theorist of art, looked hard and long at two Poussins that were at the Getty when he was a resident fellow there, just to see what meanings the paintings alone might yield without benefit of scholarly glosses. The paintings, both of which are included, together with the one that so moved me, in the great exhibition "Poussin and Nature: Arcadian Visions," at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (until May 11), pretty much declare their meaning at once. Poussin shared an impressive literary culture with his French and Roman patrons, yet to repeat Clark's experiment and scan *Landscape With a Calm* and *Landscape With a Man Killed by a Snake* for stubborn disclosures really obscures the experience, not to mention the pleasure, of looking at them. In *Landscape With a Calm*, a spirited horse is barreling out of a barn. Certain scholars cite Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which the horse is a metaphor for the human soul, as a key to the painting. But why think there's more than meets the eye here—an achingly beautiful day, in which life just goes peacefully on? Since Plato, in fact, spoke of *two* horses, isn't there a problem of the missing horse in Poussin? If the horse stands for the soul, what do other things in the painting denote? There is a pendant to *Landscape With a Calm*, namely *Landscape With a Storm*, and it has no deeper message than what's proffered by a boilerplate newspaper editorial after some fierce storm: we can't take Mother Nature for granted. The sweetness of life under calm skies is certain to give way to thunderheads and high winds.

The painting that so moved me, that made me feel I must see it no matter what else I saw this season, is a set piece about summer in the *Four Seasons*, from late in Poussin's career. Each season is a setting for a scene from the Old Testament. All four works are in the Louvre, Louis XIV having won them in a tennis match, but only *Summer* and *Spring* were, for physical reasons, able to travel to the Met. *Autumn* shows two men carrying an immense bunch of grapes meant to emblematize Canaan as the Promised Land. The grapes are as big as pumpkins, and hang from a stick like a slain boar. I still remember one of my children saying, "Surrealism, right, Dad?" during one of our ambles through the Louvre years ago. I was interested to learn from the catalog that *Winter*—a scene of people struggling in a deluge—was among the few paintings admired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a painting that must have left me cold, since I have no recollection of having seen it. *Spring* shows Adam and Eve in Paradise, and *Summer* shows Ruth and Boaz in what might be a duet, centered in an expansive and receding field of ripe grain; in the far distance are a castle surrounded by outbuildings, a mountain and backlit clouds in a dramatic sky.

Ruth and Boaz are not alone. A kind of three-way interchange is taking place between Boaz and (as the biblical text says) an overseer explaining to Boaz who Ruth is and why she's there. Ruth is the daughter-in-law of Naomi, a distant relative of Boaz's, and she had requested permission to glean in Boaz's fields. She is now kneeling, in supplication and gratitude, while Boaz welcomes her, pointing to some reapers to indicate that she can glean next to them. On the ground, next to Ruth, are her earlier gleanings. The main figures are small relative to the dimensions of the canvas, which contributes to the expansiveness of the scene. If the three main figures were removed, the picture would be a harvest scene, more austere and tranquil than *The Harvesters*, by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, one of the Met's treasures. Were they removed, there would be no story, but everything else would remain the same.

Consider the women at the left of the picture, preparing a meal under the shade of a massive oak tree. In the biblical story, Boaz tells Ruth that she can partake of the repast with the others. The gesture indicates Boaz's gratefulness to Ruth for her goodness to Naomi, whom she has followed to Judea rather than returning to her own people. If the main characters were taken away, the kitchen crew would still have a place in the picture: after all, harvesters have to be fed. There would still be puzzles in the picture, like why Poussin has placed a quadriga—a team of four prancing horses—in the upper right. A quadriga usually draws a chariot with a personage of high rank, such as an emperor. These horses are too fine for agricultural drudgery. Maybe Poussin wanted to show that Boaz was so rich that he could use racehorses to pull farm wagons. It's either a joke or an unlikely mistake.

But when I think of removing Ruth and Boaz—and perhaps the overseer—from the painting, I have in mind a puzzle of a different order. Ruth seems to me appallingly painted, as if by some journeyman artist: her hands are too large, her facial expression unconvincing; and Boaz's feet seem inexplicably huge. Compare them with the masterful way the great oak tree is rendered, leaf by leaf by leaf, or the wheat, stalk by stalk, grain by grain, as far into the distance as the eye can make out. I don't know what sort of workshop Poussin ran, but painting in the oak leaves and wheat

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stalks would seem to be a task one might relegate to studio assistants. That would certainly not be true of Ruth, one of the most important figures in the composition. Poussin said of himself, in accounting for his high achievement, "*Je n'ai rien négligé*" ("I have overlooked nothing"). One might speculate that it was due to palsy, since at the time Poussin painted the *Four Seasons*, his hands shook uncontrollably, making it harder and harder for him to paint. *Summer* is still a beautiful painting, though in candor it would be more beautiful without the biblical couple, since Ruth's awkwardness jars. In a famous essay on Poussin, William Hazlitt wrote, "the faces of Poussin want natural expression, as his figures want grace; but the backgrounds of his historical compositions can scarcely be surpassed." It appears that the problem with the figures in these last great landscapes is, as it were, a signature eccentricity. They seem like Mannerist figures, whereas in the early 1660s, when they were painted, Rome, where Poussin lived, was in the High Baroque. Their awkwardness is willed.

Still, Ruth looks positively robust in contrast with the Eve in *Spring*, which shows Adam and his companion in the middle of a Paradise full of marvelous trees, including the fateful tree with fruit that would impart the knowledge of good and evil. Eve excitedly points at the apple as she places her right hand on Adam's arm, unaware that God is hovering among the clouds. Again, the figures are relatively small amid the luxuriant foliage. Adam and Eve are as naked as worms, a state they will soon be ashamed of. Their crude nakedness is a witty touch, but in the great cavalcade of Adam and Eves—by Dürer, Cranach, Tintoretto, Michelangelo—Poussin's seem puny, boneless and weak. If they were removed, the painting would have been magnificent. As it is, the painting offers a collision in taste. Accepting Poussin's small figures is the price one pays for the magnificence of his mise-en-scène. Or it may just be the case that Nature is the main character, with the humans placed here and there to amplify through their weakness a world that could rid itself of them—of us—with a shudder and a blast. Think of the Flood, in which God gave up on humanity. All but Noah—who ended up a drunken lout in the last scene Michelangelo painted on the vault of the Sistine Chapel, showing that even the best of men were a bad lot—were proof that humanity could be redeemed only by desperate measures.

I've always been unsure of how Poussin fit into the Baroque art of the Counter-Reformation, with its depictions of torture and martyrdom mandated by the Council of Trent. The strategy was to strengthen faith by enlisting human compassion for what Jesus and the suffering saints endured so that humanity would be saved. I once saw a painting Poussin had done for the basilica of St. Peter, early in his Roman sojourn. It is, unhappily, unforgettable: its subject is the martyrdom of St. Erasmus, which consisted of public disembowelment. The Mannerist human body was svelte and elegant: it was important that figures look good in clothes. But Baroque figures were muscular and as naked as taste would allow, in order to writhe heroically under torture for their faith. As the sinewy body of Erasmus in *The Martyrdom of Saint Erasmus* shows, Poussin was entirely capable of this. Even Bernini praised the work. But Poussin's heart was elsewhere, and he turned to landscapes, painted for a group of patrons, mainly French, that expressed an agenda entirely different from the flayings, grillings, amputations and corresponding miracles that animated the painting and sculpture of the Roman Baroque. Poussin's taste was more literary and classical, and his temper more intellectual and poetic than that enjoined by the Council of Trent. Instead of arousing powerful feelings of pity for the sufferings of holy personages, Poussin's paintings were intended to inspire detachment and Stoic fortitude.

The world's beauty is correlative with its dangers—floods, eruptions and earthquakes, with death ever lurking, even in Arcadia, as Poussin's most famous painting, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, shows. (It's not in the exhibition, though *Arcadian Shepherds*, from the Chatsworth Collection, is.) In it, shepherds are scrutinizing the meaning of an inscription carved into a tombstone—"I too am in Arcadia"—a little reminder that even shepherds in a rustic refuge will die. I would surmise that the snakes that come from nowhere and take us unawares in *Landscape With a Man Killed by a Snake* are meant to reinforce the same Stoic message. In the foreground of the painting a man has been crushed by a powerful serpent at the edge of a stream, and is now being eaten by it. A second man, who has seen the horror, is running away, while a woman with a bundle of washing extends her arms as if to ask the fleeing man what is wrong. The question of the crushed man's identity is less important than the recognition that the snake could have crushed anyone. The woman could have been at the water's edge, doing the laundry, when the snake struck. In the middle distance, some men are in a boat, unaware of the foreground ruckus. As one's eyes move toward the horizon, they fall under the spell of the beauty and tranquillity of the landscape. The news will

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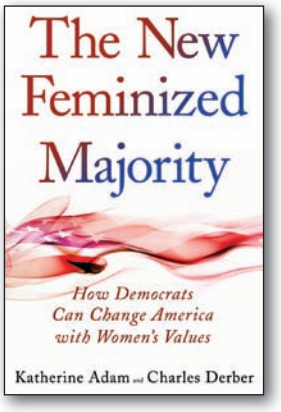

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spread; soon the people in the distant city will be discussing it. The painting incorporates the two faces of reality that define Poussin's world, and ours: beautiful and fatal.

Next to *Summer*, my favorite painting in the show is the Met's own *Blind Orion Searching for the Rising Sun*. Orion, a giant made blind in punishment for having attempted to violate a queen, was told by an oracle that he would be cured by the sun. The giant, carrying a bow and arrows that in his present condition do him little good, is shown at the extreme right of the canvas, as if he is disoriented. A person sits on Orion's shoulders, giving him directions—"A bit to the right, now straight ahead"—as the giant plods toward the east and the rising sun. The sky is filled with dark clouds, though, as if to prevent him from "seeing the light." Orion was evidently not a subject frequently shown, so it's difficult to know what Poussin's sources were, if he had any. I think it is a very deep idea, and I shall be flagrantly anachronistic in seeking an interpretation.

Recently, British sculptor Antony Gormley exhibited a singular work at the Sean Kelly Gallery in New York City. Called *Blind Light*, it consists of a large square enclosure with a single opening. The enclosure is filled with a manufactured fog made by water particles shot into it through nozzles. One enters the fog and, without penetrating the space to any distance, can no longer locate oneself. One cannot even see one's feet. There is a slightly terrifying feeling of disorientation. In a commentary on this work, the poet Susan Stewart invokes a late text of Immanuel Kant, *What Is Orientation in Thinking?* "To orientate oneself," Kant writes, "in the proper sense of the word, means to use a given direction—and we divide the horizon into four of these—in order to find the others, and in particular that of sunrise." As I see it, if we find the sunrise, we know where east is, and from that point on we refer to our body to know where west is. North is left, south is right. Our conception of space is constructed with reference to our body. Once Orion sees the sun, he knows how to situate himself. Kant is so unrelentingly abstract in his writing that it's a discovery of sorts to find a work like *Blind Orion* to be a magnificent illustration of Kant's idea of what it means to be lost and to find one's way. It's a surprise to realize how central the body is in Kant's philosophy, but what he based his view on, everybody knows: find the sun, and everything falls into place relative to left and right, up and down, front and back. Indeed, by locating the sun in *Blind Orion* through Kant, I am, in the end, no different from Poussin's commentators. It is, evidently, impossible just to look. ■

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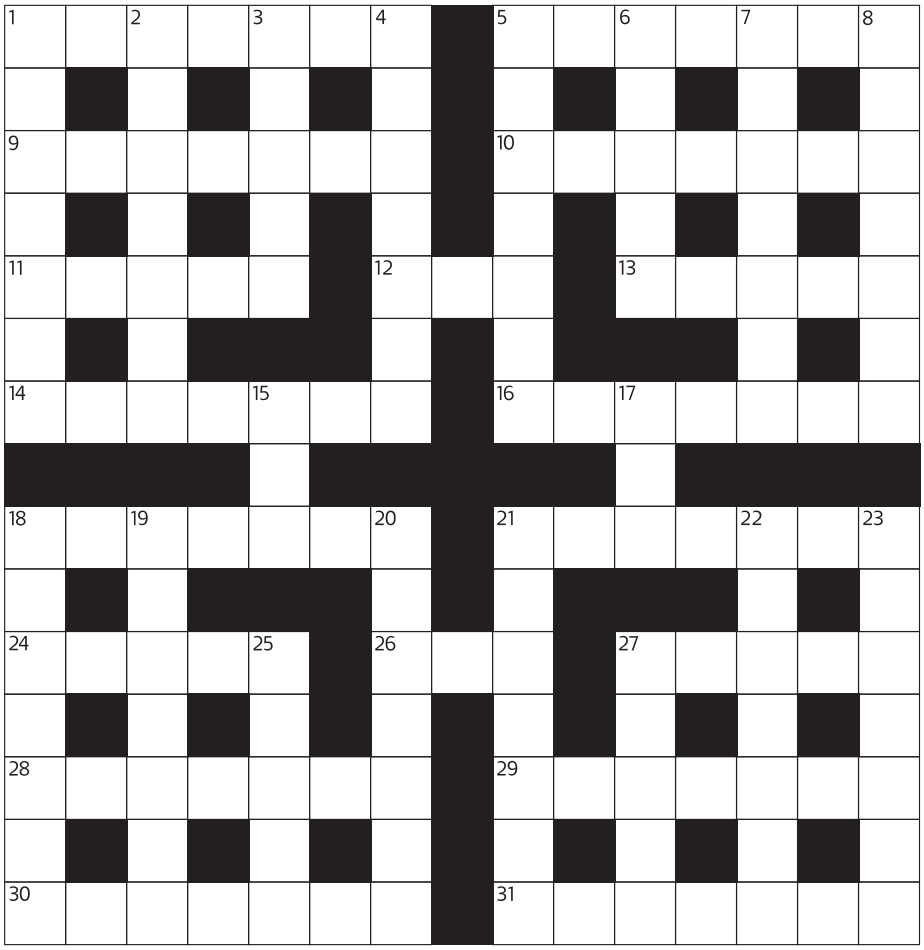
Puzzle No. 3122



ACROSS

1 Certainly not hot fighting in it, being part of the basic old wardrobe! (4,3)

5 The maid possibly got busy when she did it, being a basic part of the circus! (7)

9 A guy at the place where they drive has something behind in the shape of a spoon. (7)

10 In fact, "U"—a term to motivate one. (7)

11 See 18 down

12 Some say it means "to insure performance"—but it's only a suggestion in the end! (3)

13 A tyrant possibly, but nothing in a bunch of cows! (5)

14 Making it perfectly legal, you'll find it in public; it lynches a victim! (7)

16 Where you might expect to find the Bishop's codes, i.e., enciphered. (7)

18 This is something people go out on when against—or at least in favor of—trying! (7)

21 and **27** down When one could find a number of drummers drumming, later than in the song, being just play. (7,5)

24 The caper of an old clown, but I can't place it correctly! (5)

26 and **17** down A common girl has what might produce gold—plenty of it! (6)

27 New York, like a combination in old Malawi. (5)

28 What the housewife got when the job was pressing. (I took President Reagan on an outing—no gin allowed!) (4,3)

29 An innocent unworldly girl is genuine, though disturbed. (7)

30 Some consider it a pretty pickle, with a grand that belongs to the lady and family. (7)

31 Mr. Kennedy comes back and sets the letters wrong—and just hates the answer! (7)

DOWN

1 If Mr. Jolson were much funnier, he might bill himself so! (7)

2 Supposedly one is moonstruck. (7)

3, 15 and **25** Those who are anxious to go home might do it at work, but at first it might be in your pocket, and at last on the shelf. (5,3,5)

4 One has to go out to make one, as part of a green tryst. (7)

5 Was wrong to get very quiet, like a TV horse, and traded the result. (7)

6 How it chases to show there was a good one and a bad one in Oz? (5)

7 Stumped, or on what could become a stump. (2,1,4)

8 With the wrong rate, you could get led badly, but you might put your foot down on it! (7)

15 See 3

17 See 26 across

18 and **11** across Tossing the ball around, making a musical sound has a tricky position. (7,5)

19 Certainly not "in go," but it should be the result of something! (7)

20 Get thin—perhaps you'll have to do this to your belt in times of need. (7)

21 Everything in an "even" situation gets counted. (7)

22 What a show-off does when half-flat with certain relative connections. (7)

23 An old-fashioned outburst to wildly throw a couple of important points. (7)

25 See 3

27 See 21 across

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3121

T	I	P	S	T	A	F	F	■	F	L	Y	I	N	G
O	■	O	■	A	■	O	■	E	■	I	■	O	■	O
P	I	P	E	D	■	R	I	G	O	L	E	T	T	O
I	■	P	■	P	■	S	■	R	■	T	■	A	■	D
C	R	E	M	O	N	A	■	E	R	I	C	S	O	N
S	■	D	■	L	■	K	■	S	■	N	■	■	■	E
■	S	T	E	E	L	E	■	S	I	G	N	A	L	S
O	■	H	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	N	■	S
U	P	E	N	D	E	D	■	P	A	L	A	C	E	■
E	■	■	■	I	■	O	■	L	■	E	■	H	■	C
S	T	I	N	G	E	R	■	A	N	T	I	O	C	H
T	■	S	■	I	■	S	■	T	■	S	■	R	■	E
I	L	L	A	T	E	A	S	E	■	O	M	A	H	A
O	■	E	■	A	■	L	■	A	■	U	■	G	■	T
N	E	T	T	L	E	■	B	U	T	T	R	E	S	S

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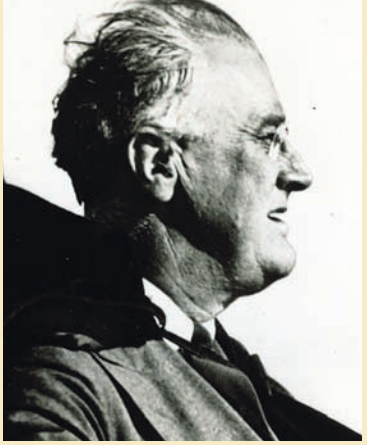

A MONUMENTAL THANK-YOU TO FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

In 1973, Governor Rockefeller and Mayor Lindsay changed the name of New York City's Welfare Island to Roosevelt Island in tribute to FDR. A three-acre site at the tip of the island was to become the Louis I. Kahn-designed Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park, celebrating

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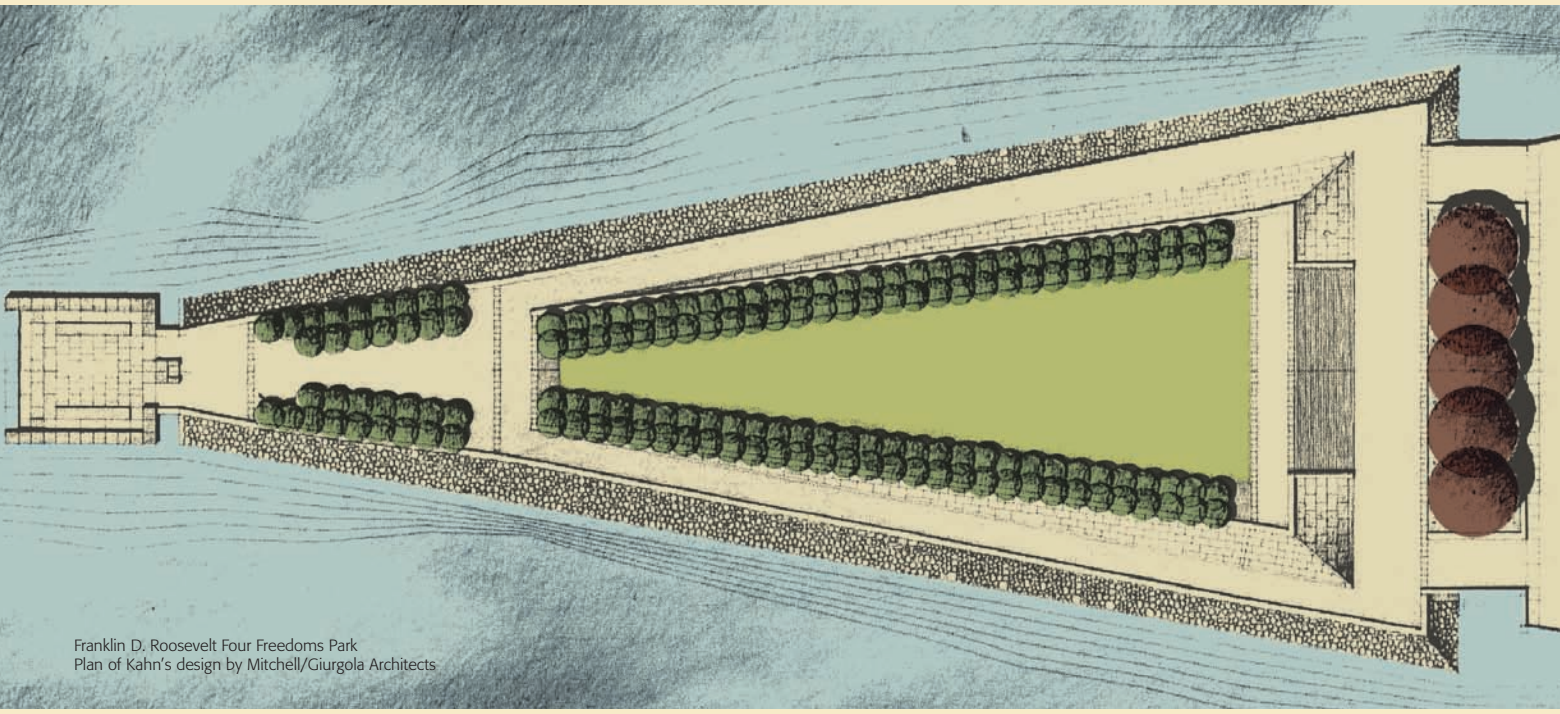

Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park
Plan of Kahn's design by Mitchell/Giurgola Architects

As The New York Times then wrote, "It would face the sea he loved, the Atlantic he bridged, the Europe he helped to save, the United Nations he inspired."

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